

Desolate Era

(莽荒纪)

Book 22

True God

I Eat Tomatoes

(我吃西红柿)

Story Description:

Fate had never been kind to Ji Ning. Wracked by illnesses and infirm his entire life on Earth, Ning knew early on that he would die as a teenager. What he didn't know was that there really was such a thing as life after death, and that the multiverse was a far larger place than he thought. A lucky twist of fate (one of the few in Ning's life) meant that Ning was reborn into a world of Immortals and monsters, of Ki Refiners and powerful Fiendgods, a world where Dynasties lasted for millions of years. A world which is both greater...and yet also smaller...than he ever could imagine. He would have the opportunity to join them, and in this life, Ning swore to himself, he would never let himself be weak again! The Era he was born into was a Desolate one, but Ning would make it his era.

Original Story can be found here: [Link](#)

Chapter 1: Becoming a True God

Ji Ning opened his eyes and looked at the beautiful bloodlotus flowers hovering in the air around him. Although their baleful aura filled the entire region, the aura was unable to disguise their beauty. Ning almost felt as though he could see a dazzlingly beautiful woman surrounded by that sea of blood. The woman's face was the face of the woman he wished to see the most. She silently stood there, amidst the bloodlotus flowers, smiling at him.

“Senior apprentice-sister...”

Ning gently murmured these words to himself. He was silent for a moment, then waved his hand and took back the bloodlotus flowers.

Then, Ning sat down in the lotus position and began to train in the [Solitary World God].

Stillness.

His heartrate began to slow down; in fact, it very nearly stopped. His blood flow began to stop as well. Ning just sat there, seeming to have become a solitary, withered tree. However, his senses were more acute than ever before.

“My divine body...” Ning traced the sensations of starvation back to its source, finding the sense of hunger that permeated his entire body.

“There we go.”

“Time to begin.”

Ning immediately initiated the technique for making the breakthrough.

“Let the Dao of the Sword serve as the core.” Instantly, the divine power that permeated every single cell in Ning's body began to change, transforming into countless tiny swords. Every single drip of divine power was in the shape of a sword, making it as though Ning's entire body was composed of countless tiny swords. Every single tiny sword embodied the essence of a Grand Dao, the Dao of the Sword.

When breaking through to become a True God, an Elder God, or a World God, there was one thing in common that was needed: A specific Dao had to be used as the core.

Two identical sets of rocks. If one's construction techniques were poor, they would result in a flimsy, easily destroyed building. But if one's construction techniques were good, they would result in a building that would last for thousands of year.

The principle was the same. If one wished to build a powerful divine body, one needed to use absolutely brilliant techniques. The trick here lay in the Dao that was used for the core.

Take Ning, for example; as an Empyrean God, his divine body had reached the level of perfection long ago. He wasn't able to make any further improvements whatsoever. However, to step into the higher realm of True Gods, he first had to have sufficiently pure divine power. His divine power had to be more than a hundred times more pure than that of an ordinary Empyrean God, which meant that he would have to change even the core Dao which was the source of his divine power. When Ning had become an Empyrean God, his core Dao had been the Dao of Rainwater. Now, for the sake of breaking through to become a True God, Ning chose to use the Dao of the Sword as his core.

In the Three Realms, it was believed that there actually weren't any 'taboo' Daos that could not be used as the core. Upon mastering a specific Heavenly Dao, one would generally use that Heavenly Dao as the core for becoming a Daofather.

However...

The techniques passed down by World God Northrest included many details notes within them.

With each breakthrough to a new realm, the divine body would be remade anew and perfected. The core Daos used each time should not be contradictory ones! For example, if he had become an Empyrean God through using the Dao of the Inferno as his core, then when he became a True God he shouldn't use the Grand Dao of the Waterdrop. If he did, the

two Daos would interfere with each other. He would still be able to become a True God, but he would never have any chance of becoming an Elder God again.

In the Three Realms, becoming a True God through cultivation was considered the apex of power; they naturally wouldn't care about such a thing.

However, some of the high-level cultivators within the endless primordial chaos had set their sights on greater heights. They learned from the wisdom of their elders, and so also set down rules of their own to ensure their successors would know which choices were taboo. For example, the Daos that you chose for making your breakthrough absolutely could not be Daos that repelled each other! Once that happened, the divine body would have an unstable foundation and it wouldn't be able to advance much further.

The element of water and the Dao of the Sword, however...one was an elemental Dao, while the other was an attacking Dao; there were no contradictions at all. Thus, there wouldn't be any issues caused by choosing the two.

If both Daos were elemental Daos, such as the Daos of Fire, Water, Metal, Earth, and Wood, there would be contradictions. The only question would be how serious the contradictions were.

If both Daos were attacking Daos, such as the Daos of the Sword, the Saber, etc., there would also be contradictions.

If the contradictions were minor, one would still eventually be able to become an Elder God, but becoming a World God would be much more difficult.

If the contradictions were major, with the Daos being opposite-aligned, then even becoming an Elder God would be extremely difficult. As for becoming a World God, there would be no hope of that at all.

In the primordial chaos, this was considered to be secret information. Only people with exalted statuses would be in possession of this knowledge. World God Northrest, for example, knew these things because

Vastheaven Palace had an excellent repository of legacies. Ordinary cultivators weren't in possession of this information. Ning wished to tell his master and the others, but when World God Northrest had transmitted these legacies to Ning, Ning had long ago been forced to swear a lifeblood oath that unless he became a World God, he was not permitted to teach anyone the things which World God Northrest had taught him.

Boom!

Ning activated the technique for making a breakthrough.

Instantly, his divine body gave birth to an incredibly powerful sucking effect that filled the prisonworld. The prisonworld had an enormous formation that was meant to distill the primordial chaos within it into chaos nectar, but as Ning made his breakthrough, his body began to ravenously draw energy from the primordial chaos. This caused the formerly calm primordial chaos within the prisonworld to suddenly become turbulent.

Rumble...

More and more chaos energy was drawn into Ning's body and converted into divine power.

The Dao of the Sword served as his core, and it transformed the chaos energy into divine power that was far purer than the divine power he had as an Empyrean God. It was the divine power of a True God.

As more and more divine power built up inside Ning's body, it slowly began to evolve and transform. Every single bit of divine power in his body was transforming.

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"What's going on?"

"Why can't I draw any more divine power? The prisonworld's formation is constantly leeching energy from the primordial chaos, taking away more than 90% of it, but we should still be able to draw power from the remaining amount. But now, I can't draw any power from it at all."

“What happened to the primordial chaos? Why did it become so frenzied and turbulent?”

The Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals imprisoned within the prisonworld, alongside exceptional True Gods and True Immortals who were able to tap the power of primordial chaos such as True God Shiyu, all became puzzled.

“A breakthrough?”

“A Fiendgod Body Refiner has made a breakthrough. By the looks of it, it is at least a breakthrough to the True God level. In fact, it could very well be a breakthrough to the Elder God level.” Upon sensing how frenzied the primordial chaos had become, the prisoners quickly understood what was happening. However, they were quite puzzled. Generally speaking, those with enough potential to make a breakthrough would’ve done so long ago in the outside world. There was no way to even sense the Daos in this world. In the past three chaos cycles, not a single prisoner had made a large breakthrough like this. Who had just broken through?!

Some prisoners quickly thought of the newly arrived Overseer.

“Could it be the Overseer?” True God Shiyu, who had replanted his flower garden within the gorge, couldn’t help but frown.

The Fiendgod Body Refining techniques of the Three Realms generally drew on the power of outside stars. The [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens], for example, drew from the energy of the Solar Star and the Lunar Star. The other techniques would draw from the Seven Big Dipper Stars or from other star systems and constellations.

Where did the energy of stars come from?

The primordial chaos gave birth to many stars. The energy given off by stars, ‘stellar energy’, was essentially the energy of primordial chaos that had already been converted. This sort of pre-converted energy was naturally easier to absorb. The [Solitary World God], however, was even more profound; when breaking through, one could draw energy straight from the primordial chaos itself.

However, only in the exact moment of the breakthrough would this be possible. It was much like how the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] allowed for the energy of Lunar Truewater and Solar Truefire to descend upon its practitioners in the moment of breakthrough. During normal cultivation, however, one needed to slowly, steadily draw upon stellar energy.

The [Solitary World God] was able to absorb all types of stellar energy. It could even absorb energy from the frozen star on which Ning was currently located.

If Ning had some insights into the Dao of Primordial Chaos, then even during normal cultivation he would be able to draw energy from the primordial chaos.

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A grassy area.

Ning was seated in the lotus position, surrounded by an crater. It was as though he was an enormous meteor that had smashed on the ground and created a crater, but in reality it had been created by the enormous flow of chaos energy that had surged here earlier.

“Whew.”

Ning opened his eyes.

“I’ve changed.” Ning could sense how powerful his body had become. Previously, he was a mere Empyrean God, but thanks to the [Taowu Eighteen Fiendgods] and the [One True Body] technique he was equivalent to a half-step True God! Now that he had broken through to become an actual True God, he could be considered half a step into the Elder God realm of power.

“In all the Three Realms...”

“The likes of Daoist Three Purities, Lord Tathagata the Buddha...the likes of Suiren, Shennong, and Fuxi...and even the likes of Daomother Devilhand and Keeper Everwood of the Seamless Gate...they are nothing more than True Gods,” Ning murmured to himself. “I am a True God as

well, and I can be considered a half-step Elder God. Finally...I finally have the power I need to change the course of the entire war for the Three Realms.”

The major powers of the three Realms were primarily composed of Daofathers and True Gods.

Three Purities, Tathagata, Suiren, Shennong, Fuxi, Subhuti, Houyi, Daomother Devilhand, Keeper Everwood...all of them were True Gods! True Gods and Daofathers!

The reason why they were able to unleash the overlord level of power and be comparable to Elder Gods in might was primarily because their insights into the Dao were far, far too profound.

Tathagata, for example, had thoroughly mastered all five of the Heavenly Daos of Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, Earth. These five Heavenly Daos formed a complementary set known as the Five Elements, joining together to unleash a truly dominating level of force. His insights into the Dao of Primordial Chaos had also reached an inconceivable level! By relying on his insights into the Daos, he was able to unleash a level of power that was comparable to that of Elder Gods.

The same was true for the likes of Fuxi, Shennong, and Suiren; they all had exceedingly high levels of insights into the Daos!

Mastery of the Heavenly Daos of Yin and Yang, mastery of the Heavenly Daos of the Five Elements...all of them had extremely profound levels of insight into the Dao, which was why they were comparable to Elder Gods!

Daofathers could be divided into three levels of power.

Ordinary Daofathers were quite ordinary indeed; they would usually have mastery over one or two of the Heavenly Daos.

Top-tier Daofathers generally held mastery over fifth-stage taiji-force, infiniforce, swordforce, or other types of force.

Overlord-class Daofathers were equivalent to Elder Gods! Firegod Zhurong, Watergod Gonggong, the Ancestor Dragon, the Phoenix, and the other Elder Gods were born with mastery over one Heavenly Dao, and

their insights into the Daos were significantly inferior to that of Tathagata and Three Purities. However, thanks to the great power of their divine bodies, they still were overlord-class powers. Alas, some died in the wars for supremacy during the Primordial Era, while others died in the war that ended the Primordial Era.

Nuwa had eventually left.

Fuxi had chosen to reincarnate. He had become a human, but to this very day he had yet to awaken his memories from his past life. He was just a True God and a Daofather, not an Elder God.

A number of the Elder Gods of the Seamless Gate had also died in battle, with the Lord of the Demonheart having fused himself into the Heavenly Daos.

In all the Three Realms...the only true Elder God was the Lord of All Fiends. Him and him alone! The second could be considered Ji Ning...a half-step Elder God!

“My insights into the Dao, compared to the other overlords, are rather lacking. However, my path is the path of swordforce. By relying on my fifth-stage swordforce and my sword-arts which surpass the limits of the Heavenly Daos, as well as my half-step Elder God divine body, I should have the power of an overlord Daofather.” Ning had battled against Daomother Devilhand, and so he knew exactly where he ranked in terms of power.

“Seamless Gate. Godking!” Ning’s eyes were filled with a strong, murderous intent. Now that he had become more powerful, his murderous intent had only strengthened even further.

“I’ve changed.”

“The world...shall change as well.”

Ning murmured these words softly to himself, his voice filled with a thick desire to kill.

In the past, he had to wait. Had to endure.

That was only because back then, he wasn't strong enough yet. But now...he was!

"I won't rush things. First, I'll repair the surface layer of Violetjewel. By then, I'll be even more powerful." Ning waved his hand, putting away the stone sword-steles and the jade shrine. He then transformed into a black lightning serpent, disappearing into the horizons with a flash as he flew towards the location of the Five Elements Cauldron.

Chapter 2: Divine Sword, Violetjewel

Ji Ning descended from the skies, landing next to the Five Elements Cauldron. He turned to look at the ancient stone platform next to it, as well as the the blood-colored sword placed atop it. The sword's body was still filled with cracks.

"Violetjewel..." Ning stared at the sword for a moment, then waved his hand. Whoosh! A large amount of treasures came flying out of nowhere, every single one emanating astonishingly powerful auras. The treasures almost instantly formed a small mountain in size. These were virtually all of the Protocosmic spirit-treasures Ning had acquired from the hundred-plus True Gods and True Immortals.

And after sweeping through so many True Gods and True Immortals, Ning had also acquired a Chaos treasure. The Chaos treasure was a great warhammer that sparked with countless flickers of lightning.

"So many Protocosmic spirit-treasures...well, no point to having too many of them." Ning pointed to the distant Five Elements Cauldron. "Activate."

Rumble...

The Five Elements Cauldron instantly began to emanate an aura of power and might as its handles radiated with five blinding colors of light.

"In you go." Ning released a thin sliver of sword-attribute divine power that immediately swept all those Protocosmic spirit-treasures up. The sabers, swords, axes, beads...the various Protocosmic spirit-treasures continuously flew into the mouth of the Five Elements Cauldron, which furiously ground them apart and extracted the Five Elements essence from within them. In just ten seconds, Ning had thrown nearly thirty Protocosmic spirit-treasures into the cauldron, transforming them into tiny bits of debris. The amount of Five Elements essence inside the cauldron's storage region had increased by quite a bit as a result.

The many Protocosmic spirit-treasures flew in, batch by batch.

Any major power of the Three Realms would've been terrified by this sight. Ning himself felt pain in his heart as well, but for the sake of repairing Violetjewel...it would all be worth it.

Crackle...hiss...pop...

Sounds of treasures being broken down rang out continuously from within the Five Elements Cauldron. The mountain-sized pile of treasures that had been next to it was shrinking rapidly, at a pace that could be detected with the naked eye. Soon, almost all of the treasures were completely used up.

"So much essence?" Ning looked at the Five Elements Cauldron. The storage region within it now contained an enormous amount of Five Elements essence.

A large amount of debris and rubble flew out from within the mouth of the cauldron. As it flew out, it was merely the size of a sphere that was roughly a few meters in radius, but once it completely exited the cauldron it quickly expanded to become a massive mountain of debris that was thirty thousand meters high. Ning 'pincer'ed the rubbish with his divine power, then gave them a casual toss. Swoosh! The massive pile of debris flew hundreds of kilometers away, and where it landed a giant mountain was born.

"Let's see if it works, this time. Based on my previous experiences...this amount of essence should be enough." Ning turned to look at the blood-colored sword atop the stone dais. Swoosh! The sword instantly flew into the air and came to hover in front of Ning.

"Emerge." Ning pointed at the sword.

Five streams of colored energy surged out from the Five Elements Cauldron; the gold of Metal, the blue of Water, the green of Wood, the crimson of Fire, and the black of Earth. They swirled around the blood-colored sword in circles, and Violetjewel instantly began to shudder. It was like a starving beggar who had suddenly encountered a scrumptious feast. It instantly began to furiously devour the 'food' surrounding it. The five streams of energy completely surrounded it, but one could still

vaguely see that the surface of the blood-colored sword was slowly beginning to heal. Some cracks were visibly growing smaller and smaller before disappearing entirely.

Time slowly passed.

More and more of the energy streams flowed out of the cauldron and into Violetjewel. The speed at which the sword was being repaired at was noticeably much faster now than when Ning had been using Pure Yang treasures.

It spend more than two hours swallowing the energy of the Five Elements essence before the cauldron finally ran empty.

“Eh?!” Ning stared at the beautiful blood-colored sword hovering in the air, a slight frown on his face. The sword was breathtakingly, terrifyingly beautiful, but two tiny cracks could still be seen on the body of this beautiful sword. These two were the two final cracks that remained.

“It actually isn’t repaired yet.” Ning frowned. “What should I do? I’ve used up almost all the Pure Yang treasures and Protocosmic spirit-treasures. I only have a single Chaos treasure that I don’t need, but there’s a limit to how strong this cauldron is. It wouldn’t necessarily be able to destroy a Chaos treasure,” Ning mused to himself.

The Five Elements Cauldron was just a Protocosmic spirit-treasure. It would be extremely difficult for the cauldron to destroy a Chaos treasure and extract essence from it.

“Oh, right.” Ning suddenly thought of another treasure. With but a thought, he instantly caused an ape-shaped golem to appear in the air. It was the Envoy of All Things.

“The critical components to this Envoy are all destroyed. There’s no point keeping it around. The Seamless Gate paid an enormous price to create each of these Envoys; when a Daofather is in command of them, they are all capable of unleashing power close to that of an overlord-class figure. This treasure is far more useful than a Chaos treasure, and it is made from more valuable materials as well.” Ning secretly nodded to himself. “It has to have a great deal of Five Elements essence within it.”

Although the Envoy was powerful, the physical makeup of the Envoy itself was merely comparable to top-grade Protocosmic spirit-treasures. For such an enormous, powerful golem to reach the Chaos treasure level in its entirety was far too difficult.

“Go.” Not hesitating at all, Ning threw the Envoy into the Five Elements Cauldron as well.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

The Envoy instantly began to be ground apart. It was extremely hard to forcibly break apart a top-grade Protocosmic spirit-treasure, but the Five Elements Cauldron was able to accomplish it easily. It operated on the basis of principles that were completely antithetical to the existence of treasures such as the Envoy! After a long while, the entire Envoy had been completely harvested. Nothing was left but some debris, with a large amount of Five Elements essence having been extracted.

“A single Envoy contains far more essence than a hundred Protocosmic spirit-treasures. No wonder the Seamless Gate, despite all of its vast resources, was only able to produce a few of them.” Ning’s eyes lit up. He immediately guided the extracted Five Elements essence outwards, sending those five streaks of energy to once more swirl around Violetjewel.

Rumble!

Violetjewel began to emit a ringing soon as it quickly absorbed the Five Elements essence. Ning carefully stared at those two small cracks, watching as they quickly shrank in size and depth, then completely disappeared. Next, some of the shattered rune-lines on the inside of Violetjewel began to be repaired as well. However, repairing the internal structure of Violetjewel was far more difficult.

A short while later, all of the Five Elements essence was used up. The amount of internal damage that had been repaired, however, was almost negligible.

“World God Northrest’s words were correct.” Ning sighed softly. “Repairing the surface layer is easy, but repairing the internal damage...

it'll be thousands of times more difficult.”

“Fortunately, the most critical and precious part of the sword, its core, remains perfectly intact. Even though my sacrifice of the Envoy and all those treasures only allowed me to repair the surface layer, the sword can still once more unleash some of its true power.” Ning stretched his hand out and the blood-colored sword fell into his hands.

As soon as the blood-colored sword entered Ning’s hands, he could sense the inconceivable power held within it.

However, because the internal structure of the sword was badly damaged, only a portion of its full power could be unleashed at present.

“What a terrifying sword.”

Ning gently swung the sword.

Whoosh.

The space in front of him split apart, creating a tear in space that stretched out to ten thousand kilometers.

“Although only part of its power is usable, it’s still terrifyingly strong. Thanks to this sword, in all the Three Realms my offensive attack power is most likely number one. Only Keeper Everwood, Lord Tathagata the Buddha, and a few others who are extremely skilled in defense would be able to withstand a head-on blow from me,” Ning murmured softly to himself. The existence of this sword made a huge difference to him in terms of power.

Without this sword, Ning was still an overlord-class figure, comparable to an Elder God...but with it, he stood at the very peak of power, even amongst overlords! As for exactly who was stronger and who was weaker, that was a question that could only be settled through actual combat. It had been a long time since the war that had ended the Primordial Era, after all; no one knew exactly how much stronger the major powers on each side had become. Perhaps there were other figures who were hiding their true power as well.

For example, Buddha Jueming of the Buddhist Sangha. He had also

trained in the [Solitary World God], and also had the [Nine Elements Destruction]. Ning believed that after so many years of training in it, Buddha Jueming had to have become an extraordinary figure as well. However, Buddha Jueming remained very low-key in the Three Realms, which was why most major powers viewed him as being just an ordinary True God or Daofather.

“It is important to be cautious at a time like this.”

“It’s best if I avoid using Violetjewel, but if I’m forced to use it, I’ll need to ensure that it has a tremendous effect.” Ning knew very well that unleashing his trump card in a sudden, explosive manner would make it extraordinarily effective. If Violetjewel was to make an appearance, he wanted to make sure that the major powers of the Seamless Gate would lose their lives as a result.

“Come here.” Ning willed it, and the blood-colored sword immediately flew into his body, resting itself within the Jindan region inside of him.

“Now, it’s time to go deal with True God Shiyu.” Ning wanted to acquire the Heavengazer Tower very badly. The thing he needed the most right now was time. If he was able to master a Heavenly Dao, he would have a chance of becoming an Ancestral Immortal or Elder God!

Swish. A Darknorth sword appeared in Ning’s hands.

There were a total of six Darknorth swords. During his recent battles, he had encountered some True Gods and True Immortals who would rather die than bend the knee to him. Ning had shown them no mercy at all and slain them, allowing all six of his Darknorth swords to be upgraded to the Chaos treasure level. However, according to how World God Northrest ranked things, Ning’s six Darknorth swords could only be considered standard-grade Chaos treasures.

Chaos treasures, according to the records which World God Northrest had given Ning, could be divided into standard-grade, high-grade, and top-grade treasures.

“Against True God Shiyu, the Darknorth swords will be enough.” Darknorth sword in hand, Ning transformed into a black lightning

serpent that disappeared into the horizons.

Chapter 3: A Single Sword

Within the mountain gorge.

A silver-haired man was standing amidst a garden of flowers. He gently plucked a flower, lowering his head to smell its fragrance. His face, however, remained a bit gloomy and downcast.

“Overseer...” The silver-haired man murmured these words to himself. “Is it him?”

The earlier turbulence in the primordial chaos...True God Shiyu had also come to the conclusion that it had most likely been someone breaking through to become a True God or perhaps Elder God! The prisoners, however, had been trapped in the prisonworld for far too long; if they had any breakthroughs to make, they would’ve made them long ago. The chances for one of the prisoners to make a breakthrough was far, far too low. Thus, the most likely answer was that it was the alien Overseer who had been lucky enough to stumble across the prisonworld who had made the breakthrough.

“That alien is extraordinarily powerful. If he really did make a breakthrough...things will be rather troublesome.” The silver-haired man’s face was troubled. “He’s the Overseer, after all; he surely has many treasures on him. Although my defensive skills are formidable, I won’t be able to outlast him in a battle of stamina.”

His only option was to slowly draw energy from the primordial chaos inside the prisonworld. The prisonworld had an enormous formation in it that was monopolizing the vast majority of the primordial chaos, distilling it into chaos nectar. Thus, the amount which he could make use of was quite miniscule. The Overseer, however, was able to replenish his strength from the outside world. This alone guaranteed that he wouldn’t be able to match the Overseer in a battle of stamina.

“Eh?” True God Shiyu suddenly turned his head.

A black lightning serpent had appeared in the distance. With a flash, it appeared in the air above the gorge. It was that white-robed youth, and

he was wielding a black sword in his hand. The white-robed youth descended from the skies, landing on the ground. His aura was extremely ordinary, almost like that of a mortal's, but True God Shiyu's face turned solemn as he looked at the youth. True God Shiyu then let out a cold laugh. "It hasn't been that long since our last fight, but you've come again. It seems that it really was you who made the breakthrough just now."

"It was." Ning walked towards him, Darknorth sword in hand.

"So what if you did? Last time, I was able to easily defend against you without using any divine abilities at all. Even if an Elder God or Ancestral Immortal came, I'd still be able to hold out, much less against you." True God Shiyu stared coldly at Ning. He remained quite prideful. Back when he had lived in the chaos-kingdom of Pangaea, he had been able to survive multiple fights against Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals and escape unscathed.

"You being strong...that's what makes it fun." Ning smiled as he stepped forward, a single sword in hand.

True God Shiyu manifested a cudgel in each of his two hands, staring solemnly at Ning as he approached. Suddenly, Ning transformed into a streak of light, his aura increasing by an explosive amount. When he struck out with his sword, it was as though he was Pangu cleaving apart Heaven and Earth. His massive black sword seemed to cause the world itself to begin to crumble as it went smashing towards True God Shiyu with irresistible power.

"Hmph." True God Shiyu's twin cudgels spun in two distinct lines, coming together to vaguely form a gigantic Taiji diagram which he used to defend against that terrifying sword-blow.

BOOM!!!!

Ning's sword was like Pangu's axe, chopping down against the two crossed cudgels. True God Shiyu was immediately smashed flying backwards, and even the ground beneath his feet was shattered. A massive gouge appeared in the ground, and the nearby flowers were all

instantly crushed into dust by the shockwave. Even the distant mountains began to tremble and crack apart.

[Brightmoon] sword-art, Heavenbreaker stance!

“Your sword-art has improved, compared to last time.” True God Shiyu stood within that massive crater, looking back at Ning. “It’s only been a short while, but not only has your divine body become far more powerful, even your sword-arts have improved.”

What he didn’t know was that Ning had spent six hundred years training in Undermoon Lake, engaged in multiple life-and-death battles in the outside world, then even more battles in the prisonworld. These battles had been like a whetstone that had continuously served to polish and sharpen Ji Ning’s skills. It was only natural that his sword-arts continued to improve at a dramatic rate.

“And your cudgel-arts remain as mysterious and profound as ever.” Ning stood in front of him, still wielding just a single sword. With a flicker, he charged towards True God Shiyu once more, causing a dazzling crescent moon of sword-light to suddenly flash.

Faced with this beautiful crescent of sword-light, True God Shiyu’s face turned even more solemn. Twin cudgels in his hands, he hurriedly strove to block against this dazzling strike.

Thud!

In the end, the sword-strike was dodged. True God Shiyu, however, didn’t dare to relax in the slightest, because Ning’s next sword-strike was now arriving. Sword-light flashed again, and it was as though the dazzling sun in the skies had suddenly been covered by dark stormclouds, casting the world in shadow. True God Shiyu felt as though this terrifying strike had cast him into a nightmarish world.

Slash! Slash! Slash!

Every single attack Ning now used was the ‘Shadowless’ stance of the [Brightmoon] sword-art. It had always been unpredictable and fast, but now that it was being unleashed by someone who was a half-step Elder

God, it became even faster and even more astonishingly powerful. It was already a sword-art that surpassed the limits of the Heavenly Daos. Thus now, although it was just slightly faster than before, it instantly became much more difficult to block than it had been in the past.

“I hate this type of sword-art the most.” True God Shiyu hurriedly blocked three sword-strikes before he was forced to use a divine ability to manifest four more arms. Each of his six arms now held a cudgel as he hurriedly strove to block.

Ning continued to merely use a single sword. This single sword, however, was incredibly taxing for True God Shiyu to defend against! “Where the hell did he learn a sword-art like this that surpasses the Heavenly Daos?” True God Shiyu ground his teeth. “He has such a powerful body, and his sword-arts are absolutely marvelous. How the hell did he luck out into learning something that surpasses the Heavenly Daos?!” If this sword-art hadn’t surpassed the limits of the Heavenly Daos, it would have been much easier for True God Shiyu to defend against them. Instead, True God Shiyu now found it hard to defend against Ning’s single sword, even when he was using six cudgels to fight back.

The Shadowless stance...it was ephemeral and unpredictable, and it moved faster than lightning.

In terms of raw, overwhelming power, the most formidable strike was the ‘Heavenbreaker’ stance.

In terms of an assassin’s strike that focused on instant, sudden speed, the most formidable strike was the ‘Blood Drop’ stance.

Ning’s sword-arts continuously fluctuated between forms, with his Shadowless stance continuing to shock and unnerve True God Shiyu, putting him in a bad position. His sword-art were simply far too unpredictable and strange. The ‘Heavenbreaker’ stance relied on raw power, and each time Ning used it he was able to send True God Shiyu flying away. The Blood Drop stance was an assassin’s strike that was the most penetrative attack of all; each time Ning unleashed it, True God

Shiyu could feel his entire body turning cold.

Last time, it had been fairly easy for him to defend against the Blood Drop stance, since it was a straightforward attack with few transformations to it; it focused mostly on speed. Now, however, Ning's speed had become so incredibly fast that even though it was straightforward, it was still so hard to block as to cause True God Shiyu's heart to tremble. If it was just a hair faster, he probably wouldn't be able to block at all; the sword would go straight through his head and kill him.

"I admit defeat." Suddenly, a voice rang out.

Ning was stunned.

True God Shiyu retreated backwards by a considerable distance. He stared at Ning, a look of helplessness and resentment in his eyes.

"Admit defeat?" Ning was a bit speechless. Although his main goal was to acquire the Heavengazer Tower of Radiance, True God Shiyu was an excellently skilled foe. Such a foe was not easy to find! He had actually been able to resist more than ten sword-strikes from Ning, who had been using the three main attacking stances of [Brightmoon]. This was truly incredible, as even Ning believed himself to have reached the overlord level of power.

Ning truly treasured the chance to fight against such a formidable foe. After all, at present Ning didn't have any plans to fight against Elder Gods or Ancestral Immortals.

The entire prisonworld only had a total of sixteen imprisoned Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals! All sixteen of them had foundations that were superior to his, and they surely had far greater insights into the Dao as well. The True Gods and True Immortals here couldn't be compared to them. Most likely, Ning wouldn't necessarily be a match for them even when simply comparing offensive attacks.

For example, although Ning had fifth-stage swordforce and attack speed that surpassed the Heavenly Daos, True God Shiyu had mastered and merged fifth-stage taiji-force and infiniforce. Although True God Shiyu's body was a bit weaker, he was still able to hold out against Ning for quite

a long period of time.

The Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals would most likely have an even higher level of attainment in the Dao.

They had a stronger foundation and more insights into the Dao. The only advantage Ning had was Violetjewel, which gave him some degree of confidence in being able to retreat safely. However, it was also quite possible that the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals had some special tricks up their sleeves as well. Their bodies and Jindans were all equivalent to that of the Lord of All Fiends, after all! Individuals at this level of power couldn't be judged according to common standards. Even in the chaos-kingdom of Pangaea, they were second only to those three World Gods.

The techniques of Pangaea were somewhat more advanced than the techniques of the Three Realms as well. What abilities did these sixteen Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals have? Ning wasn't sure, and he wasn't confident in fighting them. If his true body was killed in battle, rebuilding it would be no easy task. This was because Ning's 'spare' clone had also become a True God as well.

When one clone advanced to a new stage, all other clones would make the same breakthrough. This was one of the hidden laws which governed the world. When the breakthrough was made, the primordial chaos would be agitated as it voluntarily sent its power into the bodies of the clones. Thus, the 'spare' clone was also filled with the power of primordial chaos, and also became a True God.

To remake seventeen True God bodies would require an exceedingly long period of time.

"Yes. I admit defeat. Last time, I was easily able to defend against you, even when you were in your three-headed, six-armed form." True God Shiyu shook his head. "Now, I'm using six arms of my own, but you are able to push me back so easily with just a single sword. I'm exhausted. I can sense that if you send a few more sword-strikes my way, I will definitely lose. You've improved your sword-arts so quickly, and its speed

surpasses the limits of the Heavenly Daos. I'm thoroughly convinced by my defeat and of your superiority. I can give you my three Chaos treasures...but I hope in the future you will give me my freedom when you have the power to do so."

"Alright." Ning nodded.

In the future, he would have to follow his lifeblood oath and leave the Three Realms, as Mother Nuwa had done before him. He would enter the primordial chaos and search for Vastheaven Palace. If he had the power to release the prisoners of the prisonworld by then, he would do so.

Chapter 4: The Crescent World

True God Shiyu was highly skilled in defensive techniques and fleeing maneuvers, precisely because he was someone who valued his own life dearly. He obediently bent the knee and submitted.

Ji Ning soulsoured him, took his three Chaos treasures, then left.

“He was so astonishingly powerful and dazzling, even amongst True Gods and True Immortals. As expected, there were some marvelous reasons for that.” After soulsourcing him, Ning had learned that True God Shiyu had once acquired the legacy of a deceased World God along with four Chaos treasures. The Heavengazer Tower of Radiance was one of the four. True God Shiyu had traded two of the other Chaos treasures for a ‘Darkwind Skysplitter Cudgel’. His possession of this cudgel was an important part of the reason why he was able to fight back against Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals despite being a mere True Immortal.

True God Shiyu had learned powerful divine abilities from that legacy, but alas, all of those divine abilities were sealed with a lifeblood oath. Not even soulsourcing him had allowed Ning to acquire them.

Ning had searched through the memories of many True Gods and True Immortals by now. Each of them had experienced special encounters which had allowed them to reach this level of power.

Whoosh. Ning landed atop a mountain. He waved his hand, producing a small tower before him.

The tower was completely silvery-white in color, and it was covered with a faint aura of golden light. The tower was shaped just like a pyramid. Ning held the small tower up with one hand, sending his senses inside of it. He could sense that spacetime within the tower was rather chaotic. Normally, spacetime should be extremely stable and hard to disrupt. Daofather Subhuti was capable of affecting spacetime, and this little tower was also capable of it.

“Bind.” Ning immediately sent his divine power into the tower, binding this Chaos treasure. As he bound it, he immediately made it suppress its

aura. It became quite unremarkable to behold, no longer emitting any golden light at all.

Before being bound, a treasure would generally emit an aura of power. After being bound, everything was up to the desire of the treasure's owner. It would be very easy to change its appearance.

"In I go." Ning willed himself inside. He disappeared from the mountain. The only thing left was the pyramid-shaped tower, levitating in the air at the peak.

"Eh?" Ning looked at his surroundings. This was a region that merely had a perimeter of three hundred meters. The region was pyramid-shaped and seemed extremely stable, but the flow of time was clearly quite different inside here.

"How strange." Ning raised his head to look at the pyramid-shaped region he was in. At the very tip of the pyramid, circles of dim light could be seen where spacetime was rippling faintly. These dim circles of light could be also be seen at each of the four corners of the pyramid. Ning's divine power filled the entire tower, and thus he could use it to 'see' the many divine runes that were constantly flowing through the insides of the tower.

"It has changed spacetime, and in an extremely stable manner." Ning sighed softly in amazement. "Although Mother Nuwa was able to do this, that was only with a grand formation. In addition, it was only possible in a set location that couldn't be moved. This Chaos treasure, however...the person who created the Heavengazer Tower was most likely even more formidable than Mother Nuwa, the creator of the Six Paths of Reincarnation. But of course, Mother Nuwa entered the primordial chaos long ago. I imagine she's even more formidable now than she was in the past."

"Ten times."

Ning's thoughts and memories were linked to his clones in the outside world. He could thus naturally sense how much more quickly time was progressing within the tower. The difference was quite obvious.

“Time to speed up the flow of time.” Ning immediately began to test out the process of further speeding up time. His Immortal energy began to rapidly deplete, and the flow of time began to speed up as well, going from ten times to twenty times, then thirty times. His energy began to deplete more and more rapidly as the tower’s energy consumption began to skyrocket.

“At twenty times the normal rate of time, I use up energy at the same rate as I replenish it.”

“Thirty times the normal rate of time starts to take a bit of effort.”

“Forty times...I can still handle it.”

“Fifty times...getting difficult!”

Ning came to a halt after increasing the flow of speed to fifty times that of the outside world. He smiled. “My true body and my Primaltwin are both inside the tower; this places a major burden on it. However, when my true body is outside battling, I can have my Primaltwin calmly spend its time meditating in the tower. That’ll be ideal.”

The white-robed Ning immediately left the Heavengazer Tower, leaving behind only the black-robed Ning.

“Maintaining fifty times the normal flow of time...I’m still using up a lot of energy, but it’s much easier now than before.”

“Sixty times...the energy usage is getting fast again.”

“Seventy times...”

“A hundred times...this is getting difficult.”

“Two hundred times...energy is being used up way too fast.”

“Three hundred times...the amount of energy being used up is astonishing.”

For the sake of getting a better sense of how much energy would be used, Ning continued to furiously increase the flow of time.

Four hundred times! Five hundred times! Six hundred times! A thousand

times!

At a thousand times the normal flow of time, half of his energy was consumed in an instant. Shocked, Ning finally came to a halt.

“There’s a limit to how much the Heavengazer Tower can speed up the flow of time.” Thanks to his control over this treasure, Ning could tell that there was a limit to its power. He nodded to himself. “According to what I just sensed...a thousand times should be that limit. However, I can only maintain that speed for two seconds. Training requires time. I need to at least be able to train for a hundred years worth of time in the outside world. A hundred years of time in the outside world translates into thousands or tens of thousands of years within the tower. If I use up energy too quickly, no amount of spirit-pills will suffice.”

He spent a few moments calculating and pondering. In the end, given that the Endwar was looming, Ning decided to take the risk of maintaining a flow of time that was a hundred times that of the outside world’s!

“I’ll need to prepare some extra Great Firmament Immortal pills to stay at this speed for an extended period of time. It’s now time to return to the Three Realms.” The white-robed Ning put the tower away, then left the prisonworld.

The Primaltwin remained inside the tower. It needed to spend time meditating on the Dao!

Ning’s goal was to master an entire Heavenly Dao! He could only do this upon returning to the Three Realms. There was no way to meditate on other Daos when within the endless primordial chaos. Upon mastering a Heavenly Dao, Ning would have a chance of becoming an Ancestral Immortal or an Elder God. His power would definitely surpass that of an overlord-class Daofather by then!

However, Ning didn’t dare to feel too confident. The Lord of All Fiends was an Elder God himself! He had been able to escape from the clutches of Mother Nuwa, who had broken through to become a World God, and he was the person who worried Ning the most. In addition, more than

half a chaos cycle had gone by since the end of the Primordial Era. That was enough time for a minor figure to become a mighty one! How powerful were the two alliances? Hard to say. Things would only be made clear when the Endwar came.

And...what was the cause of this great war?

It was still a mystery!

Although he already stood at the very peak of power in the Three Realms, Ning still wished to reach even higher heights.

Within the endless Void.

Ning appeared out of nowhere. He stared at the distant Solar Star, blazing with seemingly infinite heat, then gave the icy Lunar Star a glance as well.

"The Three Realms." Ning murmured softly to himself, then took out a message talisman and filled it with his Immortal energy, notifying his master of his arrival.

"Disciple." Subhuti's voice echoed within the empty space around him.

"Master, I wish to return to the Crescent world," Ning said.

"Very well." Instantly, a spatial whirlpool appeared in the empty space around him. Ning gave the spatial whirlpool a hard look. He could now vaguely sense that aside from changing space, this whirlpool also made slight alterations to time. The Crescent world didn't exist in the same temporal dimension as the rest of the major worlds of the Three Realms, which was why the other major powers had no way of finding it at all.

Ning stepped into the spatial vortex and disappeared from the Void.

Blue skies and white clouds greeted his arrival.

Ning appeared in the middle of the air. "Eh?" Ning glanced downwards with surprise, seeing a beautiful island off in the distance.

"Master actually led me here?" Ning was quite surprised, as he thought that the whirlpool would've led straight to Mount Innerheart.

“Eh? Uncle White. Little Qing. And...my daughter Brightmoon? All of them are on the island?” Ning became even more surprised. His ‘spare’ Primaltwin clone was still by his daughter’s side, albeit quietly hidden. It wouldn’t make an appearance unless his daughter was in grave danger. Upon arriving, Ning could sense that his Primaltwin was right at that island. Clearly, his daughter, Little Qing, and Uncle White were there as well.

“She’s already a Celestial Immortal. Why is she staying on this island?”

“In the past, Master always brought me directly to Mount Innerheart. Why has he brought me here, this time?” Ning felt quite curious, but he still flew downwards. As he moved closer to the island, he could sense his heart clench involuntarily. Ning gave the beautiful island a closer look, and as he did his face blanched as though he had seen something terrifying.

“This formation...it’s so mysterious, but even the tiny bit of it that I can sense is utterly terrifying.” Ning felt dread in his heart. He was already an overlord-class figure, but he could still feel a vague sense of danger emanating from this island.

“Disciple, come in.” Subhuti’s voice suddenly rang out.

“Yes.” Ning quickly landed. Although this island held a terrifying formation within it, the formation didn’t act to impede him at all. Ning was able to easily and safely land on the sandy beaches, and as he did he immediately saw a distant group of Immortals flying around in the skies above the island. He also saw a number of linked palaces that radiated mighty auras.

“Isn’t that the Carefree Immortal Palace of Exalted Celestial Carefree? That’s a top-grade Protocosmic estate-treasure.”

“And...that’s the Three Realms Dragonrover Ark of Daofather Snowdragon?”

Chapter 5: A Change in the Three Realms

As a half-step Elder God, Ji Ning possessed incredibly sharp vision. When he swept the island with his gaze, he saw many Immortal palaces, flying arks, and mazes that were extremely famous in the Three Realms. Many were treasures belonging to True Gods and Daofathers, and all of them possessed extremely powerful defenses.

“Junior apprentice-sister, look, that’s Sword Immortal Darknorth.”

“So he is Ji Ning?”

“I heard Father say that Sword Immortal Darknorth’s sword-arts are absolutely astonishing. In fact, his sword-arts are the best sword-arts of the Three Realms, and he’s just as powerful as Father is.”

“Best in the Three Realms? That’s a bit exaggerated, isn’t it? He’s simply mastered the [Five Treasures]; his swordforce is still merely at the fourth stage. His true body has been wiped out by the Seamless Gate as well. When he was using the Envoy, he was perhaps comparable to Master, but I heard that the Envoy’s been ruined. With his true body lost as well...he surely is much weaker than Master now. He was born at the wrong time. If he was given another ten thousand years, he would probably be far more powerful than he is now.”

“Look. That’s Ji Ning over there.”

“Sword Immortal Darknorth?”

“Such a pity. I heard that he was ambushed by the Seamless Gate.”

“The killer was Swordfather Darklight...supposedly, he was killed by Houyi afterwards. Houyi truly is incredible. He didn’t even use his arrows; he just used a single blow from his hatchet to kill Swordfather Darklight.”

“My senior apprentice-sister told me that Ji Ning’s talent is absolutely incredible. He’s no less talented than Houyi.”

“Perhaps. But for now, there’s no way that Ji Ning can be compared to Houyi; the difference in power is simply too great. If his true body was still alive, then after a few million years he would perhaps be a match for

Houyi. Now, however...there's no hope of it happening."

"A pity."

The island wasn't that large, just a few hundred thousand kilometers in size. Given how many Immortals were present, quite a few noticed as soon as Ning arrived on the island. All of them felt pity for Ning. They all felt that Ning had been born at the wrong time! He was born with utterly astonishing talent, but alas he had been born just a little too late.

"What's going on? So many treasures have appeared here, and the secret formation protecting this island is utterly terrifying..." Ning's heart was filled with questions. "And these Immortals...there are even Empyrean Gods and True Immortals here, many of whom are the descendants and progeny of major powers."

"Come over here." A mental message was sent to him.

Ning turned to look in towards the direction from which the message had come. His eyes were filled with torch-light, and he was able to see a seemingly ordinary Daoist monastery looked far off in the distance.

"Master?" Ning was truly stunned now. This was the monastery which Patriarch Subhuti lived in. It had been located on Mount Innerheart for countless years. Why did it now appear atop this island?

Swoosh. Ning immediately flew a hundred thousand kilometers before landing before the monastery.

"Uncle-master." Standing at the entrance of the monastery were the two Dao-novices, Clearwater and Whiteriver. Both of them called out quite respectfully, and their eyes were filled with curiosity and admiration as they stared at Ning.

Ning relaxed slightly upon seeing these two 'children'. Their presence meant that everything should be fine. Ning immediately strode into the monastery.

Soon, he saw the white-haired Patriarch Subhuti seated on the ground in the distance.

“Master.” Ning immediately walked towards him, then respectfully knelt on the ground.

“Sit.” Subhuti smiled as he looked at Ning.

Ning sat down in the lotus position as he looked at his master.

“Aren’t you curious?” Subhuti looked at Ning.

“Of course I am.” Ning nodded. “The Crescent world...in the past, this island didn’t exist. Now, it suddenly has appeared out of nowhere, and has such a terrifying formation protecting it! The estate-treasures, palaces, and flying arks of many major powers are here as well, as well as many of their disciples and progeny. And you, Master...you actually moved your own monastery here as well!”

“Master, can it be that the major powers of the Three Realms are using this place as their refuge?” Ning frowned.

Subhuti nodded. “This place has indeed become a place of refuge.”

Ning felt an uneasy feeling in his heart.

“Master, Lord Tathagata the Buddha, Daoist Three Purities, the Primordial Imperial Clan...they each have their own abilities. It shouldn’t be hard for them to protect their disciples and progeny. Why is it that they’ve all been moved over to the Crescent world?” Ning hurriedly asked, “Has the war taken a turn for the worse?”

“It has indeed, but we are doing this just to prepare for the worst,” Subhuti said.

“It really has taken a turn for the worse?” Ning was shocked. He had only spent six years in the prisonworld. How could such drastic changes have occurred in the outside world?

“What’s going on?” Ning immediately asked.

“Listen to me carefully,” Subhuti said. “When the Seamless Gate ambushed you, we negotiated with them and agreed that they were no longer to use Envoys in the war for karmic luck, while you were not to participate either. After the negotiations, the Realmwars began once

more, and everything proceeded as we expected. However, half a year ago...”

Ning was secretly shocked. Something unexpected had happened half a year ago?”

“Half a year ago, Daoist Three Purities could sense that given how ferocious the war for karmic luck had become, as soon as it ended the Endwar would immediately begin! Aside from our two sides, there are two other forces that we have to reckon with. If they aren’t dealt with, then it is very possible that those two forces will take advantage of our conflict to become the final winner.”

“Two other forces?” Ning was stunned.

“The first is Old Man Yuan’s forces,” Patriarch Subhuti said. “The Four Ancestors of the River Source aren’t that powerful; before the Endwar begins, they will have to choose to join one side or another. In truth, they aren’t powerful enough to try and take advantage of the war to become the final victor.”

“The second, however...is the Primordial Ruinworld!” Patriarch Subhuti had a solemn look on his face.

Ning was suddenly jolted.

The Primordial Ruinworld?

Right.

The Primordial Ruinworld! He had been so focused on the Seamless Gate that he had nearly forgotten the Primordial Ruinworld. When he had been exiled into the Nihilum Zone, he had suffered attacks from the Snaphorn world of the Primordial Ruinworld. In the end, it had been his master Subhuti who had intervened to rescue him and wipe out those three Queen Mothers. The Snaphorn world was just a weak power in the Primordial Ruinworld; if the entire Ruinworld rose up together, they would constitute a terrifyingly powerful force! Not even True Gods or Daofathers would dare to casually enter the Primordial Ruinworld; they could very well die if they did!

“The Primordial Ruinworld is far more powerful than the Four Ancestors of the River Source,” Patriarch Subhuti said. “After the war that ended the Primordial Era, Mother Nuwa drove all of those alien Outsiders into the harsh environment of the Primordial Ruinworld.”

Ning nodded. The Primordial Ruinworld’s environment was indeed harsh and inhospitable. Both space and time were scrambled there. The environment itself was quite deadly; ordinary True Gods and Daofathers could easily die if they encountered a shattered region of spacetime.

“When Mother Nuwa became a Pangu-level divinity,” Subhuti explained, “She invincibly dominated all her opponents. The reason why she didn’t wipe out the alien Outsiders was because she wanted to leave them behind for us as ‘neighbors’, constantly reminding us of the importance of being vigilant. We were to never again engage in internal civil wars. In fact, their very existence was a way of subtly ensuring that we would continue to train and grow more powerful.”

“Mother Nuwa’s actions were quite correct, and we agreed with them back then. During the Primordial Era there were no outside invaders and so we constantly engaged in internal wars, causing many major powers to perish.”

“Ever since Mother Nuwa left them behind, we have never again engaged in large-scale civil wars,” Subhuti said. “In fact, experts from the Three Realms will often enter the Primordial Ruinworld region to test and temper themselves. This has resulted in the Immortals and Fiendgods of the Nuwa Alliance to constantly grow more powerful, resulting in quite a few new True Gods and Daofathers being born.”

Ning nodded. An outside threat was a good way to ensure internal unity.

“Daoist Three Purities decided that before we were to begin the Endwar against the Seamless Gate, we should first deal with the Primordial Ruinworld,” Patriarch Subhuti said. “Those alien Outsiders have been forced to live in the deadly Ruinworlds, and they have always wished to enter our Three Realms. Once both the Seamless Gate and our Nuwa Alliance are both exhausted by the Endwar, they will definitely seize this

opportunity to invade from the Primordial Ruinworld.”

“Right.” Ning agreed with this.

“And so, we raised this matter with the Seamless Gate. Since there’s no way to avoid the Endwar, it would be best if both sides join together to deal with this future threat first.” Patriarch Subhuti shook his head. “But the Seamless Gate was completely disinterested in fighting against the Primordial Ruinworld.”

“They weren’t interested?” Ning was puzzled. “Why is that? Do they want to leave it up to us to handle? They want the Nuwa Alliance to waste its own power? But...but they aren’t fools. They should understand that if we don’t get rid of the Primordial Ruinworld, neither side can fight the Endwar with confidence.”

“It’s not as simple as you think.” Subhuti shook his head. “Several other major powers and I have been investigating in secret. We’ve discovered... that the Primordial Ruinworld is now filled with many, many terrifyingly powerful formations. Fuxi has looked at these formations, and he can recognize them as being the work of Keeper Everwood.”

“Master...” Ning was shocked. “Did you just say that the Primordial Ruinworld is filled with many formations that were laid down by Keeper Everwood?”

“Yes.” Subhuti nodded. “We can say with a 90% certainty that the Primordial Ruinworld allied in secret with the Seamless Gate a long time ago.”

A cold look was in Subhuti’s eyes. “The Seamless Gate...we permitted them to remain in the Three Realms and live amongst us, but now, for the sake of winning the Endwar, they actually dare to ally with those alien Outsiders? Have they forgotten? The great war between the two chaosworlds was instigated by those alien Outsiders to begin with! Hmph. Hmph! Enough of that. As far as those of us from the Pangu Chaosworld are concerned, the Seamless Gate is also an organization of alien Outsiders.”

“Then what should we do?” Ning quickly asked.

“You saw it for yourself. The Crescent world has become a place of refuge.” Subhuti said coldly. “We have already sent a strike force of major powers deep into the Primordial Ruinworld. We are going to wipe out all of the alien Outsiders within the Ruinworld!”

Chapter 6: Those We Protect

“Wipe out all the alien Outsiders in the Primordial Ruinworld?” Ji Ning was rather worried. “Is that really doable?”

“Now that they’ve joined forces with the Seamless Gate, it’s uncertain,” Subhuti said. “However, the major powers that we sent out are led by Fuxi and Tathagata.”

“Fuxi is a master of formations and skilled in tying down foes, while Buddha Tathagata possesses incredible defenses and is skilled in dealing with dangerous situations. With them leading the strike force, even if unexpected circumstances arose they would be able to hold out for a period of time, more than enough time for reinforcements to make it to their side.”

Ning relaxed slightly.

Fuxi was the number one formations expert of the Three Realms.

Tathagata could be said to have the most durable divine body of all major powers.

“They are leading a total of nineteen Daofathers with them on this strike mission, including both elite Daofathers and ordinary Daofathers,” Subhuti said. “They will work in unison, but they’ll split up into four squads to do so. All four squads will simultaneously attack a single world together.”

“A single world?” Ning was puzzled.

“Right. The Primordial Ruinworld has many worlds within it,” Subhuti said. “The Snaphorn world you encountered in the past was just an ordinary, unremarkable, small part of the Ruinworld. We’re not sure about exactly what the Ruinworld holds either, or what alien Outsider major powers are hiding where. The only choice we have is to crush all their worlds, one by one! They’ll simultaneously attack the same world together.”

“The reason why they have split up into four squads is because they are

worried that they might fall into an enemy trap or formation,” Subhuti explained. “By splitting up into four squads as they attack each world, they can ensure that even if one squad does fall into a trap formation, the other three squads would immediately become aware of it and will thus be on their guard, and can also go reinforce them and rescue them. That way, even if the Seamless Gate or the Primordial Ruinworld have set up traps, they won’t be able to get all of us at once.”

Ning nodded. He was silent for a moment, then said solemnly, “Master, I wish to go to the Primordial Ruinworld.”

“You wish to take part in the battle?” Subhuti was stunned.

“Yes.” Ning nodded seriously.

Subhuti was silent for a moment, then looked at Ning. “In the Primordial Ruinworld, both space and time are in a state of chaos. They are located in an extremely dangerous part of the Ruinworld right now. If you were to enter, you would first need to join together with them, but we don’t have a clear sense of where they are exactly. This is because the Primordial Ruinworld is simply too chaotic. I would only be able to tell you the general region they are in. It would be very dangerous for you to try and join together with those squads.”

Subhuti said these words in the hope that Ning would change his mind. He knew, after all, that Ning’s Envoy had already been ruined!

“I’m confident in my abilities.” Ning looked at his master, and as he did his eyes flashed with hidden sword-light.

“You...” Upon seeing that seven-colored sword-light flash in his disciple’s eyes, Patriarch Subhuti felt stunned.

B-but...

Lu Dongbin had mastered fifth-stage taiji-force, which was already quite impressive. But now, Ji Ning had mastered fifth-stage swordforce, which possessed even more powerful offensive abilities! It must be understood that the reason why Swordfather Darklight was so powerful as an assassin, powerful enough to kill Ji Ning’s true body with a single

sword-strike, was because of how powerful his swordforce was! Ji Ning, however, was different from Swordfather Darklight; his sword had surpassed the limits of the Heavenly Daos in terms of speed.

His sword-arts alone would ensure that he would be extremely close to the overlord level of power!

“I didn’t expect that in the blink of an eye, you would’ve reached such a level of power.” Patriarch Subhuti laughed. “It seems I was worrying over nothing. You might as well go. You have a self-cloning technique; for you to adventure through the Primordial Ruinworld won’t be too great an issue.”

“Right.” Ning nodded. “Your disciple wishes to first visit with his daughter.”

“Your daughter, Brightmoon, has been worried about you all this time. It is indeed time for you to visit her,” Subhuti said.

“Worried...” Ning was stunned for a moment, then nodded gently. He immediately left.

Subhuti stroked his beard and smiled as he watched Ning leave. “This old Daoist judged correctly, all those years ago. Ji Ning’s talent for the sword truly is superior to his talent for heartforce. In less than a thousand years, he’s upgraded his sword-arts to such an incredible level. His sword-arts alone shall ensure that he can stare down upon the entire Three Realms from his lofty perch.”

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By the side of a lake.

A black-robed maiden was quietly seated by the lakeside, staring at the waters of the lake.

“Brightmoon.” Autumn Leaf walked to her side and called out to her.

The black-robed maiden turned her head to glance at her, then turned to stare at the lake once more. She stared at the lake silently.

“What’s wrong? Why are you unhappy?” Autumn Leaf asked.

“I’m fine, Aunt.” The black-robed maiden shook her head.

“Worried about your father?” Autumn Leaf sat down next to her.

The black-robed maiden hesitated a moment, then nodded slowly. “A little. Father’s been completely devoted to his cultivation, and he was the only figure ever since the Primordial Era who was comparable to Houyi. But Aunt...you must have heard it as well. Those people were saying that Father’s true body was slain by the Seamless Gate. They said that Father’s golem was destroyed as well. I didn’t believe it, so I went to ask Patriarch Subhuti...and the Old Patriarch didn’t deny it...”

“Stop worrying.” Autumn Leaf stretched her arms out to gently take Brightmoon into her embrace. “I watched your father grow up. Your father will ignore all setbacks and continue to grow more and more powerful. He definitely won’t despair. He will never give up. You need to have faith in your father.”

“Can you tell me some more stories about Father?” Brightmoon looked at Autumn Leaf.

“Alright.” Autumn Leaf laughed and nodded.

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Ji Ning, Uncle White, and Little Qing were watching the two from afar.

“The Nuwa Alliance’s major powers have all moved their progeny and disciples here. Thus, Ji Ning, there was no way for us to continue hiding from Brightmoon what had happened to you on the Deerchaser world,” Uncle White said. “Brightmoon didn’t believe it at first and she even argued with them. Afterwards, she paid a personal visit to Patriarch Subhuti...only then did she truly believe the stories about what had happened on the Deerchaser world. She’s been worried about you for months now.”

“Mm.” Ning looked at his daughter, a warm feeling in his heart.

“Go. When she sees you, she’ll definitely be very happy,” Uncle White said.

“Alright.” Ning walked towards her.

Autumn Leaf was speaking to Brightmoon in a soft voice, telling her of her father’s stories. Brightmoon was listening intently. No matter how often she heard these stories, she never got tired of them. She always hoped to hear more.

Ning secretly felt a sense of guilt. He really was a failure of a father, having made his daughter worry so much about him. Although one of his clones had been quietly protecting his daughter this entire time, that clone had always kept in hiding, not even paying attention to the affairs of the outside world. Only when his daughter was in danger would certain restrictive seals be dispelled, allowing the clone to take a look at what was happening outside.

It had been many years, but the clone had never been activated. Thus, Ning didn’t know anything at all about what had happened in the Crescent world.

“My clone’s been staying in hiding all this time. Although this helps to temper her...perhaps sometimes, love is more important than training?” Ning quietly pondered to himself. “Was I wrong?”

“Father!” Brightmoon had turned her head, as though she had sensed his presence. When she saw Ning standing behind her, she immediately clambered to her feet in surprise and delight, then charged straight towards Ning.

“Father. You finally came back! I’ve been waiting forever and ever for you. You’ve been gone for way, way, way too long.” Brightmoon clutched at Ning, babbling nonstop.

Ning gently stroked his daughter’s hair. Ever since she had become a Celestial Immortal and manifested her body, she had chosen this appearance for herself. She looked very similar to her mother, Yu Wei. In fact, she also liked to wear black clothes. When Ning looked at his daughter, he sometimes felt as though his wife was by his side. However, his wife’s gaze was soft and steadier, while his daughter’s gaze was filled with veneration and love.

His wife was a bit colder.

His daughter was a bit more playful and hyper.

“Father, the Immortals and Fiendgods on the island are all saying that your true body was destroyed. They said you...” Brightmoon looked at Ning, her hands tightly wrapped around Ning’s arm. She said softly, “Can you stop fighting against the Seamless Gate?”

“The elders and teachers of those Immortals and Fiendgods on the island...are any of them shirking in their duties?” Ning shook his head. “I cannot simply run and hide. You should understand, Brightmoon.”

“But Father, you’ve already sacrificed enough. Your true body was destroyed and you’ve been drastically weakened. What more do they want from you? Father, you are now just a True Immortal. Even if you have powerful heartforce and can use it to command the Rahu Formation, you still aren’t a True God or a Daofather. There are many Empyrean Gods and True Immortals on the island who aren’t taking part in the war. You’ve already done much more than them, Father.” Brightmoon looked at Ning, at the verge of tears. “I’m so afraid. I’m afraid that your Primaltwin will also be killed. I’ve already lost Mother. I can’t lose you too!”

Ning’s heart shook.

“Promise me.” Brightmoon looked at Ning. “Just stay with me. Alright?”

“I’ll stay with you.” Ning’s heart ached when he saw that look in his daughter’s eyes. He nodded gently. “I’ll always stay with you. From today onwards, my Primaltwin will stay with you here.”

“Primaltwin?” Brightmoon was puzzled.

“Don’t you know? I only wear white robes with my true body.” Ning patted Brightmoon on the head.

“I thought...I thought...” A look of joy appeared in Brightmoon’s eyes.

“Others might underestimate your father, but you really should not.” Ning laughed. “My true body and my Primaltwin are both fine. In fact, I’m

even more powerful than before.” Ning stretched his hand out, and his hand glowed dimly with a seven-colored sword-light. The dazzling, brilliant rainbow sword-light possessed an aura of utterly terrifying power.

Brightmoon stared at the rainbow sword-light in shock.

She was Ji Ning’s daughter, and a disciple of Mount Innerheart. She naturally knew many things. Given that Ji Ning walked the path of the Sword Immortal, Brightmoon had learned long ago what fifth-stage swordforce was like. Thus, she recognized it right away.

“Father, y-you...” Brightmoon was filled with both joy and pride. Fifth-stage swordforce, and speed which surpassed the limits of the Heavenly Daos? This was her father! Those Immortals and Fiendgods had all been prattling on and on, but her father had actually become far more powerful than before.

“Father, you said you were going to have your Primaltwin stay by my side. Then...your true body...?” Brightmoon suddenly realized what this meant.

Ning laughed. “Will go out and fight, of course. Your father can’t just hide.”

“B-but...” Brightmoon chewed on her lips, then said softly, “I, I really don’t want you to go to war any longer, Father.”

“The Endwar is nigh. We have to step forward to face it,” Ning said it with a smile.

“When the skies collapse, let the big guys handle it,” Brightmoon argued.

“Your father is now one of the big guys,” Ning laughed. “Enough. You are a Celestial Immortal now, you know. You are acting like a little girl.”

His daughter was by his side once more. Ning could sense a surge of strength and energy come from his heart in an unbroken stream. It came from an absolutely indomitable determination that was etched into his very bones.

“I have to protect my daughter.”

“Even if it costs me my life.”

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The white-robed Ning turned his head, giving the black-robed maiden who was standing at the side of the lake a final glance. Then, he cast aside all his doubt. “Master, send me away,” Ning sent mentally.

“Be careful in the Primordial Ruinworld.” Subhuti’s voice rang out by Ning’s ears as well.

“Right.” Ning nodded.

A spatial vortex appeared in front of Ning. Ning stepped into it.

Chapter 7: Darkstill World

The Nihilum Zone of the Primordial Ruinworld. The waves of the Void continuously came crashing through this region.

Whoosh. A spatial whirlpool appeared within the Void, and from it emerged a white-robed youth. He stood there in the Void, staring towards the infinitely vast realm that was before him.

“According to what Master said, right now Fuxi and Tathagata’s squads are around the Darkstill world.” Ning’s eyes were blazing with torch-light, allowing him to clearly see the enormous, distant realm of the Primordial Ruinworld. He was quickly able to identify the region that was known as the Darkstill world.

The Primordial Ruinworld had been divided up into many parts by various alien Outsider organizations into many different ‘worlds’. The closer these worlds were to the core, the more powerful they were.

The ‘Snaphorn’ world was one of the outermost border worlds of the Primordial Ruinworld. Comparatively speaking, it was fairly weak. The most powerful members of the Snaphorn world were those three Queen Mothers, and strictly speaking they weren’t really at the level of True Gods or Daofathers! Empyrean God Redsnow, when commanding a Seven Planets God, had been able to battle against all three of them for a long period of time. Patriarch Subhuti had been able to easily annihilate all of them with a single palm. From this, one could see how weak the Snaphorn world had been.

The Darkstill world was far more powerful than the Snaphorn world.

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The Primordial Ruinworld. The Darkstill world.

Riiiiip.

Space was forcibly torn apart, allowing a white-robed youth to fly to this location atop a boat.

“The Darkstill world...it really is a dark, silent place.” Ning swept the

area with his gaze. Even the skies were grey and dark. Everything seemed to be covered by a hazy layer of gray fog, and it was completely silent here.

“I wonder where Fuxi, Tathagata, and the other Daofathers are.”

Ning's Primaltwin was still in the Crescent world. Ning had made a special Primaltwin incarnation to accompany Brightmoon, with the incarnation being able to converse with Patriarch Subhuti whenever necessary. According to what he had heard, Fuxi, Tathagata, and their squads were currently located at the Darkstill world, but it would be hard to find their exact locations without being there.

The main reason was because spacetime was in a state of chaotic flux here. One could set clear target coordinates for teleportation, but upon actually arriving one might be ridiculously far off from the original target!

This was why Subhuti had sent Ning to the Nihilum Zone, then told Ning to board his Voidship and fly from the Nihilum Zone to the Darkstill world.

“Let me search for them.” Ning immediately sent out his heartforce. Whoosh! His heartforce rippled out like the waters of a lake, spreading out in every single direction. This was a little trick which World God Northrest had taught him. With this technique activated, no one in either the Three Realms or the Primordial Ruinworld would be able to escape his detection.

His heartforce quickly spread out to encompass an enormous region. It spread out past tall mountains, deep lakes, and quite a few alien Outsiders. Those alien Outsiders were all quite weak. They weren't even close to becoming Celestial Immortals.

“Eh?” Ning suddenly frowned. There were some regions where both space and time were both so badly shattered that not even Ning's heartforce could see past them.

“I'm only able to scan a region of a few hundred thousand kilometers. There's no way to scan any further.” This was Ning's first trip into the

actual Primordial Ruinworld itself, and it was the fairly stable Darkstill world. He immediately understood why this place was known as the 'Ruinworld'! Such a dire, inhospitable environment simply wasn't suitable for life to flourish on a large scale.

"I wasn't able to find Fuxi and the others...however, towards the east I can see some signs of a battle."

Swish. Ning immediately transformed into a black lightning serpent, instantly flying more than two hundred thousand kilometers east towards the region which had been scarred by battle.

By 'east', Ning was referring to the direction from which the Solar Star would rise. Thus, in the Three Realms and in the Primordial Ruinworld, east meant a different direction for different worlds.

"Here?" Ning stood there in midair, staring down at the vast basin below him. The basin was shaped like an enormous palm print that was more than a thousand kilometers wide, and the ground below it was completely scorched black. "A palm? Could it be that Tathagata launched a strike?"

"Reverse." Ning immediately willed a temporal inversion to begin.

In places like the Primordial Ruinworld where the Heavenly Daos did not exist it was extremely difficult to use temporal inversion techniques. However, as Ning had slowly gained more insight into the Nine Chaos Seals, he was instantly able to see into the past history of most mortals. He had gained the ability to easily seeing into the past, which was really the fundamental essence of how the 'temporal inversion' technique worked.

Thus, Ning was able to easily accomplish the temporal inversion.

Whoosh. Whoosh.

Many images of the past began to flash past Ning. Soon, time had 'inverted' back to a point where four major powers had appeared in this place.

Those four major powers were led by the smiling yellow-robed Lord Buddha, Tathagata. By his side were three other Buddhas, each of which

glowed with boundless holy light.

“Darkstill, you think to stop us with small tricks such as these?”
Tathagata flew forward atop an auspicious cloud, a smile on his face as he spoke. “Hurry up and show yourself. Otherwise...your Darkstill world won’t exist for much longer.” As he spoke, he stretched out his hand. Shining with golden light, his hand descended from the heavens and smashed downwards towards the land.

The ground trembled violently as a massive palm-sized basin was imprinted deep into the earth.

“Tathagata!” An ear-piercing screech rang out, but it was quickly silenced.

“Thearch Darkstill is one of the most famous major powers of the Primordial Ruinworld. We’re destroying the various formation bases located throughout his world, but he still refuses to show himself? He must be scheming something big,” Tathagata said.

“Lord Buddha, there’s no need to worry about his plots and schemes. Let us continue to destroy their worlds, one by one.”

“Let’s go.” Tathagata nodded, then led his three mighty Buddhas to continue forward to their next destination, flying off on that auspicious cloud.

A short while later.

Swoosh. Swoosh. Swoosh. One gray-skinned, gray-cloaked alien Outsider after another descended from the heavens. They landed within the basin, then exchanged glances with each other, their eyes filled with cold rage. They then flew off as well, heading in the same direction which Tathagata and the others had just gone.

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After Ning finished viewing what had happened here roughly two hours ago, he nodded slightly. “The leader of the Buddhist Sangha and Human Sovereign Fuxi became overlord-level figures during the Primordial Era. Even though they haven’t broken through to become Elder Gods, their

techniques have surely become much better. With them in command, and with their forces split up into four squads...no single world in the Primordial Ruinworld can possibly withstand all of them at once.”

Swoosh. Ning also flew towards the direction where the others had gone.

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Although the Darkstill world was located in a region of relatively stable spacetime, there were still many regions in it where spacetime was distorted. The alien Outsiders who lived here were used to these regions and knew them well. There were some regions where only they dared traverse, and they were only able to do so because generations of predecessors had sacrificed their lives to help their race accumulate experience.

“Someone’s coming.”

“A white-robed youth.”

“He’s hesitating a bit. Oh, he’s actually come inside.”

Three alien Outsiders were gathered together within a region of distorted spacetime, staring past a restrictive formation at the white-robed youth who had just flown in from the outside world.

“Captain, the Buddhist leader of the Three Realms, Tathagata, has led three of his Daofathers to attack this world. Why has this white-robed youth appeared?” These three alien Outsiders had pale white skin, handsome faces, and were dressed in gray cloaks. All of them were top-tier Empyrean Gods in power, and they were skilled in fleeing through space.

“Judging from his appearance...it should be Sword Immortal Darknorth of the Three Realms, Ji Ning.” The alien captain frowned. “Sword Immortal Darknorth, Ji Ning...his sword-arts are extremely profound, said to be the best in the entire Three Realms. However, he himself is just a True Immortal, and his true body has already been destroyed by the Seamless Gate. The one who just appeared should be his Primaltwin.

Judging from his aura, he should still be just a True Immortal. But I'm puzzled...why would a True Immortal dare to brave our Primordial Ruinworld by himself? Is he planning to just rely on his Rahu Formation? The Heavenly Daos do not exist in the Primordial Ruinworld; there's not much natural energy for the Rahu Formation to make use of. It won't be nearly as powerful as it was in the Three Realms."

"Captain, he's advancing quite quickly. He'll be past our observation range soon," one of the alien Outsiders quickly reminded.

It was extremely hard to set up an observation formation within a field of distorted spacetime. There was no way to make it have an extremely long detection range.

"Let's go test him out." Beneath his gray cloak, the alien captain had a cold look on his face. "Let's see how powerful this Pure Yang True Immortal is."

The three of them quickly flew out in pursuit.

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A few moments later, all three of them were dead.

Ning stood quietly within the Void, giving each of their corpses a glance. "Chase me?" He was a half-step Elder God. How acute were his senses? As soon as those three alien Outsiders had gotten slightly closer to him, he had immediately discovered them. These three puny Empyrean God pawns...Ning had easily killed two of them, then heavily wounded the third one. He had planned to soulscour the third one, but alas the alien had voluntarily destroyed his own soul.

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Deep within the Primordial Ruinworld, within a round castle that glowed with dark golden light.

An alien major power was seated atop a throne here. He had a long green tail, a bald head, and handsome features. He was resting his head on his one hand, contemplating as he tapped the armrest of the throne with his free hand. Six golden-armored figures stood solemnly at

attention before him, each of which radiated auras that were far superior to the auras of ordinary Daofathers.

“These aboriginals really are quite something.” The alien Outsider seated atop the throne let out a congratulatory chuckle. “They actually destroyed twelve of my worlds. The Seamless Gate really is useless. They created all those formations, but not a single one of the True Gods or Daofathers of the Three Realms have died to them. It seems we can’t simply rely on those fools after all. In the end, it’ll be up to us.”

“Master, this chaosworld has given birth to a World God. We cannot be overconfident.” One of the golden-armored figures standing below him gave a respectful reminder.

“The ‘Lord of All Things’...it’s all his fault for being an idiot!” The seated alien Outsider laughed coldly. “He spent quite a bit of time roving about the primordial chaos and has seen quite a few chaosworlds. Back then, when Nuwa had yet to become a World God, he should’ve immediately attacked. Instead, he set up a stupid scheme to have the two chaosworlds fight against each other? How bored was he? Why didn’t he just destroy one chaosworld, then destroy the other? Instead, he started a war that caused these primitives to give birth to a World God. Before she left, she definitely left behind some techniques for her allies.”

“A chaosworld that had given birth to a World God is not so easily conquered. That’s the reason why I’ve acted so carefully and waited for the perfect opportunity.”

“Master...how about we just go back for now? Let’s build up our forces before we return. We know exactly where this place is now. When we are more powerful, we can return!” A skinny golden-armored figure suggested.

Whap!

The seated alien Outsider’s long green tail suddenly swept out and knocked the golden-armored figure flying.

The seated alien Outsider pointed at the golden-armored figure and cursed, “You fool! We barely survived the trip here; you really want us to

risk the trip back? Unless we make a major breakthrough in strength, if we go back the same way we came in, we are almost guaranteed to die. It's better for us to join forces with the Seamless Gate and slowly grind down the Nuwa alliance."

"Master! Almighty Master!" A voice suddenly called out from outside.

"Darkstill?" The alien Outsider chortled merrily. "Let him in."

Instantly, a gray-skinned, golden-robed man strode in, emanating an aura of great power. It was the master of the Darkstill world, 'Thearch Darkstill'. He respectfully fell to his knees. "Almighty Master, my minions just discovered that yet another invader with the power of a Daofather has entered the Darkstill world."

"Another enemy Daofather has come?" The seated alien outsider frowned. "Who?"

"He belongs to the Nuwa Alliance of the Three Realms," Thearch Darkstill said respectfully. "Sword Immortal Darknorth, Ji Ning!"

Chapter 8: Godfiend Witherspike

“Sword Immortal Darknorth, Ji Ning? Sounds familiar.” The alien Outsider leaned back against his throne, resting his head against his palm and muttering to himself. Moments later, his eyes lit up. “I remember now. I believe he’s one of the fastest-rising stars of the Three Realms, supposedly as talented as Houyi was. If memory serves, the Seamless Gate’s intelligence report stated that his true body was destroyed by them. Only his Primaltwin survives.”

“Primaltwins...I can’t help but feel jealous just thinking about them. Those mortal creatures who slowly rise to power have the chance to form a Primaltwin. We Fiendgods who are born from the primordial chaos don’t even have the chance to do that.” The alien Outsider shook his head and sighed.

“How can those mortal creatures be compared to you, Master?” One of the six golden-armored figures, a red-bearded elder, immediately spoke out in protest.

“Ahaha...” The seated alien Outsider laughed loudly, his laughter echoing within the room.

After he stopped laughing, he looked downwards at the still-kneeling Thearch Darkstill. “Darkstill, you said that he has the power of a True God and Daofather? Isn’t he just a third-tier True Immortal? Low-class True Immortals like him are numerous beyond count in the primordial chaos.”

“Three of my minions were slain by this Ji Ning. One of them, prior to dying, sent the scenes of his death back to our race,” Thearch Darkstill said respectfully.

“The scenes of his death?” The seated alien Outsider was intrigued. “Let me take a look.”

“Yes!” Thearch Darkstill assented respectfully, then pointed towards an empty space nearby. Instantly, moving images began to appear there. The scene displayed the three gray-robed aliens moving forward. Suddenly, a

black streak of lightning flashed past them, instantly piercing through their bodies. The black lightning serpent was simply far too fast; although the three of them could sense how dangerous it was and had wanted to flee, they simply weren't able to escape.

With a single flash, the black lightning serpent slew two of the three gray-robed figures and heavily injured the third. The scene then switched to that of a white-robed youth reaching his out with his hand, intending to soulscour the survivor. However, the gray-robed survivor instantly committed suicide.

"Quite fast." The seated alien Outsider's eyes lit up. He laughed merrily, "Those fools of the Seamless Gate...they claimed that Ji Ning's true body was killed. Just now, he used the [Ninehorn Lightning Serpent] evasion technique, something which only a Fiendgod can use. Clearly, his true body isn't dead after all. The exalted Seamless Gate...it couldn't even handle something as simple as this."

"Right. He's not dead." One of the gold-armored figures who had just one arm frowned as he spoke. "And for him to be able to use it while slaying three Empyrean Gods in an instant...and he wasn't even using a sword. Just now, he used his fingers to execute sword-arts. This set of sword-arts...incredible, simply incredible."

Thearch Darkstill agreed. "Venerable Saber speaks the truth. In the Three Realms, Ji Ning has been acknowledged as possessing the most profound sword-arts. It is said that he wields fourth-stage swordforce, with the speed of his sword exceeding the limits of the Heavenly Daos."

The seated alien Outsider had six retainers, but the only one which Thearch Darkstill truly admired was the single-armed man.

"No." The single-armed man shook his head. "He was able to display his sword-arts so easily while using the [Ninehorn Lightning Serpent]...this level of perfection in the sword isn't something which someone merely at the fourth stage of swordforce can accomplish. If my guess is correct...he has quite possibly reached the fifth stage of swordforce."

"What?"

“The fifth stage of swordforce?”

“How is that possible?”

The golden-armored figures next to him all called out in surprise. Even Thearch Darkstill was stunned.

The seated alien Outsider frowned as he looked at the one-armed man. “Saber, are you sure?”

“This is just my conjecture. His sword-arts were too fast, after all, and he used them while executing the [Ninehorn Lightning Serpent]. I wasn’t able to see it too clearly, so I’m just making an educated guess.” After speaking, the one-armed man no longer said a word.

The seated alien Outsider pondered for a moment.

He had collected these six retainers while roaming through the endless primordial chaos. Of the six, ‘Saber’ had voluntarily decided to join him in order to repay a debt of gratitude and voluntarily decided to call him ‘Master’. Saber was also the only retainer who this figure truly respected. As for the other five? He hit them and berated them as he pleased.

Ever since he had arrived at the Primordial Ruinworld, he had easily subjugated and taken control over all of the alien Outsiders here, including the most powerful ones such as Thearch Darkstill.

“Since Saber is willing to make the claim...it probably really is true,” he murmured to himself.

There were some similarities between the usage of a sword and the usage of a saber. Both were weapons meant for attacking.

“If he has fifth-stage swordforce...?” The seated alien Outsider stared into the looping scenes, peering at those three gray-robed figures as they died again and again. “He’s reached such a level despite having trained for less than a thousand years. He really is terrifying. But of course, it’s also possible that Saber’s conjecture is wrong. Still, no matter what, for him to be able to kill those three in such a short period of time means that he definitely has the power of a Daofather.”

“Intriguing.” The seated alien Outsider chuckled.

“Blackheaven.” He sent a mental call directly out to Blackheaven.

“Come here.”

Celestial Immortal Blackheaven was relaxing and drinking wine in another part of the castle. This time, he was the one responsible for delivering messages on behalf of the Seamless Gate! This was a golem-body he was using, and so even if it was destroyed he wouldn't care in the slightest. He naturally was quite relaxed and content.

“Coming.” Blackheaven picked up the jug of wine and headed off. No one barred his path, and a short while later he arrived at the place where the alien Outsiders were located.

“My respectful greetings to you, great Godfiend Witherspike.” Celestial Immortal Blackheaven chortled merrily as he bowed.

“Each time I see you, I feel happy.” The seated alien Outsider smiled merrily back at him. “That idiot, ‘All Things’...whenever I saw him, he used to put on such stupid airs. I would've wiped that idiot out long ago, if he didn't have so many subordinates or that pack of utterly unbreakable Envoys. I didn't have the chance to personally see him die, but whenever I see you, his former treasure-spirit, I feel happy all the same.”

Celestial Immortal Blackheaven continued to chortle merrily, seemingly not bothered in the slightest.

He had been enslaved by the Seamless Gate, becoming the personal retainer of the Lord of All Fiends. Why would he be bothered by a bit of jesting from the great Godfiend?

“You used to be the treasure-spirit for the Blackheaven Cauldron. That idiot had to have used the Blackheaven Cauldron to create the cores of those golems, yes? And you ended up learning those techniques...but now, you've been enslaved by the Seamless Gate. What's the point? I think it'd be better for you if you joined me instead,” the alien Outsider said with a laugh.

“You?” Celestial Immortal Blackheaven said in a very uncaring manner, “It doesn’t really matter to me. If you can defeat my master, the Lord of All Fiends, I’d be more than willing to join you.”

“The Lord of All Fiends?” The alien Outsider frowned.

A monster.

The Three Realms really was a place that could give birth to monsters. One of these primitives, Nuwa, had actually been able to force her way into becoming a World God. This was quite a monstrous accomplishment. And the Lord of All Fiends...he had actually been able to flee with a group of experts while being pursued and attacked by a World God. The World God, Nuwa, hadn’t even been able to catch up to him. This was an even more monstrous accomplishment!

It must be understood that World Gods all completely surpassed the limitations of the Heavenly Daos in every way, be it speed or power or other areas. But Nuwa had still been unable to catch up to the Lord of All Fiends! Most likely, the experts of the Three Realms didn’t truly understand what a terrifying accomplishment this was. Mighty Godfiend Witherspike, however, had wandered the endless primordial chaos for many years. He understood quite well.

Advancing to become a World God represented a fundamental change in every single aspect. The difference between an Elder God and a World God was simply unfathomably vast. To make it so that even a World God couldn’t catch up...it meant that the Lord of All Fiend’s insights into the Dao must have reached an even more unfathomable level.

The Three Realms was now divided up into two major alliances.

The Nuwa Alliance...when Mother Nuwa left, she must have left some treasures and techniques behind for them. These things made this alien Outsider quite nervous.

The Seamless Gate...the person who worried him the most was the Lord of All Fiends.

He was wary of both sides, which was why he had never tried to attack

the Three Realms. In fact, he had chosen to ally with the Seamless Gate instead.

“Well, enough of that.” The alien Outsider pointed towards the constantly looping images in midair. “See for yourself.”

Only now did Blackheaven turn his head to take a look, and when he did his face completely changed. That flashing black serpent of lightning, that white-robed youth who attempted to perform a soulscour...wasn't that Ji Ning?

“Ji Ning.” Blackheaven no longer had any trace of a smile on his face. Instead, it was ashen. “The [Ninehorn Lightning Serpent]? His true body isn't dead?”

“Oh, you noticed?” The alien Outsider chuckled. “Didn't the Seamless Gate claim that Ji Ning's true body was destroyed? And if I recall correctly, I think the Lord of All Fiends, Daomother Devilhand, and quite a few others joined forces to ensure it...but now, he's reappeared in the Darkstill world, seemingly with his true body.”

Celestial Immortal Blackheaven stared at the continuously looping images in the air. He forced down the rage and hatred he felt, then growled out, “Great Godfiend Witherspike, this was indeed our Seamless Gate's mistake. I've already reported this to my superiors...and I trust that Master will soon deliver an order to me.”

Chapter 9: All Slain in Battle

Celestial Blackheaven had many golem bodies that he could use. He was able to immediately send a message to the Lord of All Fiends, and the news was then quickly spread to Daomother Devilhand, the Godking, and the other high-level members of the Seamless Gate.

“What? He’s not dead?” The black-robed Godking was the most stunned of them all. He simply couldn’t accept this.

“Some sort of clone technique?” Keeper Everwood had been using a knife to whittle away at a piece of wood. When he heard the news, he frowned and began to mumble to himself.

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Deep within the Primordial Ruinworld, inside that vast castle.

Celestial Immortal Blackheaven said respectfully, “My Master said that this Ji Ning is a scourge. He hopes that when you deal with Tathagata and Fuxi, great Godfiend Witherspike, you will also deal with this Ji Ning as well.

“Oh?” The alien Outsider chuckled. “But now, it seems, this Ji Ning has a special cloning technique.”

Blackheaven said hurriedly, “Even if he does, each time he restores his body he most assuredly has to pay an enormous price. Last time, when we destroyed his true body, Houyi ended up taking away his black lightning serpent as well as his other treasures. This time, if you can kill him, he’ll lose all of those things. Without them, he will be dramatically weakened even if he does manage to rebuild his body once more.”

“Why is it that I have the feeling that you particularly want Ji Ning to be killed?” The alien Outsider looked at Blackheaven, then let out a merry chuckle. “Blackheaven, how about this? If I kill him for you, why don’t you teach me the technique for creating Envoys?”

“My old master made me swear a lifeblood oath long ago to teach it to no others,” Blackheaven said.

He was a treasure-spirit, much like the giant yellow bear of the Starseizing Manor. He had long ago trained to the level of being able to live independently from the treasure which had housed him, and could be considered a true living creature now. Strictly speaking, he had actually learned the art of golems before the Lord of All Things did. The Lord of All Things had been lucky enough to acquire the Blackheaven Cauldron, which was why he also gained access to the ancient golem crafting arts contained within it. This caused his power to instantly skyrocket, resulting in him being an extremely famous figure even amongst Elder Gods. But alas, he had fallen during his campaign against the Pangu Chaosworld and the Seamless Chaosworld.

“Damn that man.” The alien Outsider said coldly, “Tell your current master that Ji Ning has quite possibly reached the fifth stage of swordforce.”

“The fifth stage of swordforce? How is that even possible? He’s only trained for a few centuries!” Blackheaven was visibly shocked.

Ning’s mastery of the [Five Treasures] could be ascribed to his peerless talent, but to reach the fifth stage of swordforce one had to have significant insights into the essence of the sword itself. This was something that required time, as well as many life-and-death battles against powerful experts. Only after seeing enough sword-arts and gaining enough experience would one even have a chance of reaching the fifth stage of swordforce.

“He’s attacked my Primordial Ruinworld, so I really should kill him. However, I’m also doing the Seamless Gate’s dirty work for them. We have borne all the casualties in the battles to date. We agreed on a price for me to deal with Tathagata and Fuxi, but if you want me to deal with Ji Ning...I’ll need twelve chaos jewels.”

“Twelve?” Celestial Immortal Blackheaven hesitated momentarily. The energy source for each Envoy consisted of five chaos jewels, which allowed them to be able to fight for a very long period of time. The other nine Envoys probably would consume less than a hundred chaos jewels during the entire Endwar.

“Master has responded. If Ji Ning truly has reached the fifth stage of swordforce, he will deliver twelve chaos jewels after you slay his true body,” Blackheaven said.

“Good. It’s always a pleasure doing business with Allfiend.”

The alien Outsider looked downwards at Thearch Darkstill. “Darkstill, send your subordinates to try and kill Ji Ning. If they cannot, make sure they at least verify whether or not he has reached the fifth stage of swordforce. Then move to guide him into a danger zone.”

“Yes, almighty Master,” Thearch Darkstill said respectfully, then departed.

“Damn.” In private, Thearch Darkstill now had an ugly look on his face. He had once been an important general of the Lord of All Things. Later, he had become one of the four mighty Thearchs that dominated the Primordial Ruinworld. He had the power of an elite Daofather! He wasn’t one whit weaker than those six retainers of Godfiend Witherspike. The only one he felt respect and admiration for was the one-armed man. As for the other five? Thearch Darkstill didn’t fear them in the slightest.

But...

Those retainers had followed Godfiend Witherspike for a very long period of time, and he held more faith in them. He was much more ruthless and brutal in the way he treated the four Thearchs, who had only submitted to him relatively recently.

“Sword Immortal Darknorth. Ji Ning. He clearly has the power of a True God and Daofather, but I’m still supposed to go ‘verify’ if he has reached the fifth stage of swordforce or not.” Thearch Darkstill frowned. “If I want to force Ji Ning to reveal his swordforce, I’ll need to send some of my more powerful subordinates. Ugh. Whenever there is a dangerous mission, he always has the four of us send our subordinates.”

Still, Thearch Darkstill understood the reason why. When mighty Godfiend Witherspike had fled to this place, he had only arrived with those six retainers in tow. He had no other subordinates at all, and so whenever there was a need for cannon fodder to be sent out he would

naturally choose to send out the original inhabitants of the Primordial Ruinworld.

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The Darkstill world.

A large force of alien experts were flying through the air, each of whom had the power of an Empyrean God. There had to be nearly three hundred of the creatures flying forward.

“Elder brother, when your group goes to fight against Sword Immortal Darknorth, you have to be careful. The Thearch said that Ji Ning may very well have reached the fifth stage of swordforce.” The two leaders of this force looked fairly similar. Both were dressed in silver robes, and they were mentally chatting to each other.

“Although my team has been assigned to kill Ji Ning, if he really has reached the fifth stage of swordforce all we have to do is flee. We don’t have to force a fight against him. If he really has reached that stage of power...it’ll be up to your team to guide him into the Forest of Dreams,” the taller silver-robed man sent back.

The Forest of Dreams was an extremely bizarre part of the Darkstill world.

Once you entered it, you would be trapped in multiple layers of illusions. You would feel as though you were dreaming! The illusions would come endlessly, and even True Gods or Daofathers would find it hard to extricate themselves. They would often be eternally trapped within the Forest of Dreams until finally the illusions killed them.

The most terrifying thing was...not even the denizens of the Darkstill world could be certain as to exactly where the Forest of Dreams was located. This was because the Forest’s location was constantly changing. It was entirely possible that the seemingly ordinary-looking forest in front of you was actually the terrifying Forest of Dreams. However, since Thearch Darkstill was in command of this entire terrifying world, he naturally had his own ways of determining the exact location of the Forest.

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“Fuxi. Tathagata. Where are they?”

Ning stood there in midair. Spacetime was so chaotic that even his sense of directions had become scrambled.

He could no longer find any traces of Tathagata’s passing, and in a place of such chaotic spacetime there was no way he could even use a temporal inversion spell.

“Master is telling me that Lord Buddha and the others should still be in the region of the Darkstill world. Screw it. I’ll just choose a random direction and just keep flying forward.” Ning immediately began to fly forwards, although he didn’t dare fly too fast for fear of running into an enemy trap.

Shortly after he had entered the Primordial Ruinworld, Ning came to understand that the hardest part of conquering this region wasn’t defeating the alien Outsiders here; rather, it lay in dealing with the terribly environment! No wonder all the aliens who lived here desired to invade the Three Realms. None of the aliens wanted to live in such terrifying, inhospitable environments.

“Eh?” Ning’s pulse picked up slightly. He could sense an aura approaching.

After becoming a half-step Elder God, his soul had become far more powerful! His soul heartforce technique had only made his senses even more acute. Even when Daofathers moved towards Ning he would be able to sense their approach, much less the approach of Empyrean Gods and True Immortals.

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“Sword Immortal Darknorth should be somewhere in that region up ahead.” A towering, eight-armed Fiendgod was carefully flying forwards. This eight-armed Fiendgod was the culmination of 199 alien Empyrean Gods joining together in the ‘Eight-Armed Warfiend Formation’. It was one of the formations that had been left behind by the Lord of All Fiends.

Truth be told, when Thearch Darkstill was forced to send out this many Empyrean God subordinates, he felt quite distressed.

This sort of formation was quite similar in nature to the Seven Planets God. However, the Seven Planets God only needed seven Empyrean Gods to execute, while this one was used by a total of 199 Empyrean Gods. It could unleash a degree of power close to that of an elite True God's. This could be considered a 'secret technique', and the wielders who learned the core parts of the formation were all forced to swear lifeblood oaths not to teach it to any others. The person who was currently the 'core' of this particular formation was one of the warriors who had followed the Lord of All Things.

"I see him." The eight-armed Fiendgod had been searching for Ning. Suddenly, he saw in the distance a white-robed youth who was calmly standing in the air.

"You've arrived." The white-robed youth produced a sword in his hand. "Since you've come, there's no need for you to leave."

"Attack!" The eight-armed Fiendgod's aura surged explosively.

Ning, however, just sauntered forward lazily as though he was taking a stroll through a courtyard.

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"Thearch, all 199 of our warriors have died in battle." A look of grief was on the face of a golden-robed elder.

"None of them escaped?" Thearch Darkstill was incredulous. He barked out, "Show me the scenes of the battle!"

"They weren't able to send back any scenes in time," the golden-robed elder said.

"What?!" The Thearch was truly stunned now. How fast had Ji Ning killed them all, for not a single one of them to be able to send back a scene of their death?

"However, one of them trained in a special clone technique. His other

clone is currently on assignment in a different region. I suggest ordering him to return immediately so that he can tell us what happened when they fought against Ji Ning,” the yellow-robed elder said hurriedly. “We have to move quickly. If he somehow loses his clone as well, then we’ll have no way of finding any information about that battle.”

Chapter 10: Bugbeasts

Thearch Darkstill immediately gave the order for that soldier's clone to return.

A short while later.

"Thearch, Fuyou was stomped to death by Kuafu as he was trying to lure Kuafu away." A report quickly came from his subordinates.

"What?" Thearch Darkstill's face turned ugly.

For a number of Empyrean Gods to die during a time of war was nothing, but this particularly one was the only one who knew what had happened during the fight against Ji Ning. And now...he was dead. This meant that the 199 Empyrean Gods who had died in the battle against Ji Ning had died for nothing at all. No intelligence had been gained whatsoever.

"Kuafu!" Thearch Darkstill's face was black with rage.

"Where are those four squads currently located?" Thearch Darkstill asked.

The nearby golden-robed elder immediately waved his hand, causing an image to appear in midair. This was an enormous map of the Darkstill world. There were four specks of light on the map, and the golden-robed elder pointed towards one of the specks of light that was close to the edge. "This is the squad which Kuafu is leading. Kuafu, an ancient divinity of the Three Realms, possesses truly enormous power. I heard that when those ten Golden Crows wreaked havoc upon the ancient Pangu Chaosworld, Kuafu chased after them so furiously that all ten of them were terrified by him. None of them dared to turn back and fight against him. From our fights against Kuafu's squad, I can say for certain that Kuafu is indeed astonishingly powerful and is quite close to an Elder God in strength." 1

"Agreed." Thearch Darkstill nodded.

Houyi and Kuafu were once equally famous during the Primordial Era.

By now, Houyi was publicly acknowledged to be unfathomably strong and being at least at the overlord level of power. As for Kuafu, he was a bit weaker but was still quite close to the overlord level of power as well, and he was an extremely valiant warrior who was extremely skilled in combat.

“This squad here is the squad led by Human Sovereign Fuxi. This is the toughest squad to deal with. Fuxi has been able to easily see through our traps and formations, and even when he enters them he can easily break them apart from within.” The golden-robed elder continued, “That’s why we are temporarily focusing on the other three squads right now.”

“Here.” The golden-robed elder pointed at yet another speck of light. “This is the squad led by the leader of the Buddhist Sangha, Tathagata. It is just as dangerous as Fuxi’s squad is.”

“And here. This final squad is led by Daoist Jade Cauldron of the Daoist Path. Daoist Jade Cauldron possessed formidable divine abilities and has reached the fifth stage of swordforce. He definitely isn’t an easy person to deal with either.” The golden-robed figure pointed at the final speck of light as he spoke.

Thearch Darkstill frowned as he heard this. Two of the squads sent out by the Three Realms were led by overlords Tathagata and Fuxi. The other two were led by Kuafu and Daoist Jade Cauldron, who were close to the overlord level of power as well. There were multiple elite Daofathers in their teams, as well as a few ordinary Daofathers who knew certain special techniques.

Daoist Jade Cauldron was a fairly low-key figure, but he was still viewed as one of the top two figures under the command of Daoist Three Purities. He also had an extremely famous disciple of his own, the number one general of the Celestial Court during the Primordial Era...Erlang Shen, also known as Yang Jian. 2

“And where is Ji Ning?” Thearch Darkstill asked.

“Sword Immortal Darknorth is here.” The golden-robed elder pointed to a corner of the map where another speck of light had appeared. “He is

closest to Kuafu's squad."

"Oh?" Thearch Darkstill nodded.

"Thearch!" A gray-robed subordinate charged into the room, then said frantically, "Our clansman Floatstone's squad attempted to lure Ji Ning into the Forest of Dreams, but his senses were simply too keen. As soon as the squad drew close to him, he immediately discovered them and then killed them. There's no way to lure him away from far away, but whenever our people get close he kills them!"

Thearch Darkstill frowned. "The terrain is to our advantage, but we still aren't able to lure him into the places we want him to go? Are his senses really that keen?"

But of course, he had no idea that Ning was now a half-step Elder God. His soul was incredibly powerful and acute!

"Have them stay away from Ji Ning for now," Thearch Darkstill instructed. "Go."

"Yes." The subordinate hurriedly departed.

"Thearch." The golden-robed elder looked towards Thearch Darkstill. "Ji Ning is not an easy person to deal with. Even our 'Eight-Armed Warfiend Formation' was effortlessly annihilated by him. He is at least as powerful as an elite Daofather. We can tell from this alone that he has reached the fifth stage of swordforce."

"No." Sovereign Thearch shook his head. "There's many possible reasons why he was able to destroy their formation. For example, it's possible that he's broken through to become a True God. It's also possible that he's travelling with allies, that he's brought other major powers of the Nuwa Alliance with him; it could've been those allies that destroyed the formation. We can't speculate wildly before even seeing the records of that battle."

"But not even the Eight-Armed Warfiend was able to send back any information..." The golden-robed elder felt sorrowful for their losses. "Godfiend Witherspike is commanding many different forces to deal with

Tathagata, Fuxi, Kuafu, and Daoist Jade Cauldron, but we are forced to deal with Ji Ning by ourselves. Far too many members of our race have died.”

“I will go test out Ji Ning’s skills in person.” An icy gray light flashed through the eyes of Thearch Darkstill.

“Thearch, you must not!” The golden-robed elder cried out hurriedly.

“I’ll personally test him out, but I’ll do it via sending my mind to directly descend upon one of my children,” Thearch Darkstill said calmly. “Don’t worry. I won’t risk myself without a good reason.”

The golden-robed elder let out a sigh of relief.

Thearch Darkstill waved his hand. Instantly, nine mountain-sized freaks suddenly appeared in the hall next to him. There was a stone giant, an eight-legged beetle, a two-headed serpent...all of them had powerful auras on the level of a Daofather.

“I’ve spent countless years in order to rear these bugbeasts and make them become as powerful as a True God. I didn’t expect that a Sword Immortal who has trained for less than a thousand years would be capable of forcing me to use them.” Thearch Darkstill looked at the bugbeasts, and then let out friendly keening calls in response. It was as though they viewed Thearch Darkstill as their parent.

There were actually quite a few techniques in the primordial chaos that were meant for rearing bugbeasts. Strictly speaking, the [Nine Bug Solutions] which Youngflame Freak had acquired and used was actually even more profound than the technique which Thearch Darkstill used. However, Youngflame Freak was just far too weak. He was only able to make use of a tiny part of the true technique.

“When these nine children of mine fight against Ji Ning, I’ll send my mind and soul with them. Whatever they experience, I’ll experience as well. I’ll be able to get a clear sense of what Ji Ning’s skills are,” Thearch Darkstill said.

“You are going to send out all nine bugbeasts?” The golden-robed elder

felt a bit of heartache. “Three should be enough, right?”

“Best to be cautious. We’ve already failed once. We cannot fail again.” Thearch Darkstill sent out his will, causing the nine bugbeasts to once more screech in response. They then soared into the air, quickly disappearing into the emptiness of space towards Ji Ning’s direction.

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The distorted, scrambled spacetime in this area was of no threat to injure Ning. His soul was so powerful that he could sense which places posed a threat to him and which places were safe.

Swoosh. As he flew forward, his eyes suddenly lit up. A dazzling beautiful lake had just appeared before him, and there was a little island in the center of the lake which was filled with wild grass.

“I didn’t expect such a beautiful place to exist within a region of such chaotic spacetime.” Ning’s heartforce had spread out to cover an area of tens of thousands of kilometers, and it was rippling out in waves to scan every single inch of the region. He verified that it wasn’t a trap, then flew straight down to the island and sat down. He pulled out a flagon of wine, then leaned back and took a sip for himself.

He looked rather relaxed, but in truth Ning was trying to decide what his next step should be.

“Ever since I entered the Darkstill world, I’ve been attacked by alien Outsiders every so often. They keep on challenging me, and they are very familiar with the local environment. They seem to know exactly where I am as well.” Ning frowned. This was quite an uncomfortable feeling, to not know where the enemy was but have the enemy know exactly where he was.

There was nothing for it. The reason why the Three Realms had never launched an actual assault against the Primordial Ruinworld was in large part due to how inhospitable the environment here was. This place was very hard to invade.

“The Darkstill world isn’t even that big. So long as I visit enough places,

sooner or later I'll sense some energy ripples and be able to locate one of the other four squads." Ning suddenly frowned and turned to look towards the distance.

"Eh?"

"Here as well?"

"And there as well?"

Ning looked towards all eight directions from his position on the island. He could sense multiple auras approaching at high speed from different directions. He hurriedly rose to his feet, producing a Darknorth sword in his hand.

"Grwaaaaar!" Accompanied by a growl, an azure beetle that had a pair of wings on its back suddenly appeared from a distorted region of spacetime that was more than ten thousand kilometers away. Its golden eyes stared fixedly towards Ning.

"Hissssss." A giant, two-headed black serpent emerged from another part of the skies.

One bugbeast after another appeared, each of which had the aura of a True God.

Ning murmured softly to himself, "Bugbeasts?" Ning had learned multiple bugbeast-rearing techniques, both from stone steles of the prisonworld as well as from the techniques passed down by World God Northrest. There were many major powers in the primordial chaos who trained in these types of techniques. This was because major powers tended to live for a very long period of time. When they reached a bottleneck and were unable to grow stronger, they would divert a bit of their attention towards rearing powerful bugbeasts. These bugbeasts would be absolutely loyal and devoted towards them, and there was no chance of betrayal at all. They could be used to scout dangerous areas, or even block a critical blow meant for their master. There were many, many uses for such creatures.

1. Kuafu was mentioned long ago in the story via the mention of the divine ability, 'Kuafu Sunchaser'.
2. As mentioned before, this is a famous figure from Journey to the West, someone who fought Sun Wukong to a standstill when he assaulted the Celestial Court.

Chapter 11: Sword Peacock

If you were lucky, you might end up rearing a bugbeast that was even more powerful than you!

Bugbeasts possessed low levels of intelligence, and they were far inferior to cultivators in terms of their insights into the Dao. However, this was precisely why it was fairly easy to upgrade them. Their most powerful weapons were their massive, powerful bodies.

“Grwaaaaar!” The nine bugbeasts were attacking from nine different directions. They were tens of thousands of kilometers away from Ji Ning, and they all shrieked, roared, and screeched as they stared at him.

Ning stood atop the island. He swept them with his gaze, then chuckled loudly. “I wonder which ‘major power’ is so terrified that he doesn’t dare to come in person and instead sends a few bugs over.”

Thearch Darkstill, whose mind and soul was riding with these nine bugbeasts, became rather angry upon hearing this.

“My children are more than enough to kill you.” The bugbeast shaped like a stone giant roared angrily. Deep under the cracked parts of its stony exterior, flesh and blood could be seen.

“Oh? Is that so?” Ning made his move.

Swish! A black lightning serpent flashed through the skies. A distance of just ten or twenty thousand kilometers was no distance at all to Ning; for him, travelling such a distance was as easy as taking a single step was for an ordinary mortal. He immediately appeared before the stone giant, and as he arrived an icy-cold streak of swordlight descended as well.

“Damn you.” The stone giant brandished his enormous club-like hands, smashing at Ning with them and completely ignoring Ning’s attack.

“Attack!” The other eight bugbeasts flew towards him as well. But suddenly...

Snick. Snick. Snick.

The swordlight flashed back to Ning's side. Ning stood there calmly in front of the stone giant. The stone giant's fists were just about to land upon Ning, but suddenly it froze. It stood there blankly for a moment, and then...its neck, chest, and flank all split apart. Its body was chopped apart into four evenly sized pieces, and the four pieces all began to fall downwards. Ning's swordlight had completely snuffed out the stone giant's life. In fact, Ning didn't even use the rainbow-colored swordforce; against a foe of this level, there was no need to use it at all.

"What? He's this powerful, even without using any swordforce at all? This sword-art definitely is something that only an expert who has mastered fifth-stage swordforce can come up with. There's no mistaking it." Thearch Darkstill instantly became certain of this. Ji Ning hadn't used rainbow-colored swordforce, but this was precisely why he was terrifying.

"Flee." The eight bugbeasts that had been charging towards Ning hurriedly began to scatter every which way.

"You want to run?" Ning's gaze turned cold. Although he possessed the [Ninehorn Lightning Serpent] technique, these eight bugbeasts were all fleeing in a different direction, and they would soon disappear into a field of chaotic spacetime.

"Arise." Ning pointed a finger up towards the skies.

Rumble....

The skies suddenly turned dark. Streaks of rainbow-colored swordlight began to manifest in the area, and in just an instant the entire region seemed to have transformed into a world of rainbow-colored swordlight. This was a world of the sword.

The eight bugbeasts stared as the heavens and the earth around them suddenly transformed into a world of rainbow-colored swordlight. All of them were terrified. Thearch Darkstill, whose spirit was riding with them, immediately urged them to flee! Thearch Darkstill had already guessed that Ji Ning had reached the fifth stage of swordforce, which was why he wasn't surprised at all. "Hmph. So what if he can manifest a world of the sword? This is a large-scale technique, yes, but that means that the

technique will be fairly weak. Every single streak of swordlight is quite feeble; there's no way it will be able to harm my children."

"Sword Peacock!" Ning murmured these words softly, but his voice was like the voice of Heaven and Earth. When he spoke, his words resonated throughout this region as though an edict had just been proclaimed.

The brilliant rainbow-colored swordlight filling the area instantly began to merge together, forming a sight that looked like flower buds blooming or like a peacock displaying its feathers.

Whooooooooosh.

The swordlight radiated an arcane intent as it swept forward, and the countless streaks of rainbow swordlight solidified into a total of 1001 peacock feathers, so dazzling and beautiful that one couldn't help but feel intoxicated by them.

The eight fleeing bugbeasts didn't have any chance to escape at all. The terrifying swordlight passed right through them...and then their bodies completely crumbled apart, all life extinguished.

All nine of the bugbeasts had been slain!

"The seven sword-stances of [Sword-Heaven-Earth] truly are extraordinarily powerful." Ning nodded slightly.

This technique was not a technique he had created himself.

His own original creation was the [Brightmoon] sword-art, a sword-art which was meant for battling against foes in close combat. All of its techniques, including 'Heavenbreaker', 'Blood Drop', and 'Shadowless' were meant for dueling.

The seven sword-stances of [Sword-Heaven-Earth], however, were techniques that were meant for massacring weaker foes on a vast scale. They involved using a large amount of swordforce in order to massacre the enemies! This sort of technique was extremely effective against numerous weaker foes, but it was much less effective against someone who was comparable in strength to you. For that situation, the [Brightmoon] sword-art was still better.

Sometimes, sufficiently large quantities of cannon fodder could have an impact on the overall flow of a battle. Using a sword-art like [Sword-Heaven-Earth] against them could be quite effective. Ning had no desire to come up with such a butcher's technique on his own, but he had discovered [Sword-Heaven-Earth] amongst the ninety-eight sword techniques inscribed on those stone steles left behind by World God Northrest.

Just now, Ning used the second stance of [Sword-Heaven-Earth], 'Sword Peacock'.

"Daofather-level bugbeasts like them..." Ning shook his head, then took a single step forward and flew into the skies. He once more disappeared into space, advancing forward in the hopes of joining together with the other squads.

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The ancestral grounds of the Darkstill world.

"What a terrifying sword-art." Thearch Darkstill was still engrossed in pondering the dazzling sword-art he had just seen, the one which had looked like a peacock spreading its feathers. He was an elite Daofather, after all, and so he was able to see exactly how terrifying that beautiful sword-art was.

It must be understood that even when Daofathers used magic treasures, they had to send those magic treasures flying off into the distance to assault their foes. This sword-art, however, used rainbow-colored swordforce as its underlying power source. With a thought, the wielder was able to fill an extremely wide swathe of land with the swordforce while maintaining a terrifying level of power.

"Dazzling."

"Arcane."

"Shockingly sharp."

Thearch Darkstill was completely stunned. "When I followed the Lord of All Things, I went to quite a few places within the primordial chaos..."

but this is the first time I've ever seen such a dazzling, beautiful sword-art. This sword-art alone is profound enough to be proclaimed the number one sword-art of the Three Realms. Terrifying. This sword-art is utterly terrifying."

Of course, he had no idea that this was something which World God Northrest, someone who stood at the very peak of power amongst World Gods, had come up with after meditating on the nameless sword-art he had acquired. Even other World Gods would be amazed by this technique, to say nothing of a mere True God such as Thearch Darkstill.

"It won't be easy to deceive an expert like this. To lure him into the Forest of Dreams will be far too difficult. In addition...the Forest might not be able to hold him." Thearch Darkstill had personally witnessed that last sword-art, after all. He now had a much higher opinion of Ji Ning than before. In his heart, Ji Ning was now considered an even more terrifying figure than Daoist Jade Cauldron.

"How could he have come up with a sword-art like this?" Thearch Darkstill couldn't help but ask himself this question. "Well...I need to go see Godfiend Witherspike right away."

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Deep within the Primordial Ruinworld. Within the dark golden castle.

Witherspike remained seated atop his throne, relaxing as he stared at four different scenes that were playing out in the air before him. These scenes were of Kuafu, Daoist Jade Cauldron, Tathagata, and Fuxi as they fought in combat.

"The Nuwa Alliance really is powerful...and this should just be part of their total strength." He couldn't help but let out a sigh.

"The bulk of their forces remain in the Three Realm, unwilling to leave their headquarters. If they did, our Seamless Gate would absolutely wreck their worlds and their headquarters." Celestial Immortal Blackheaven let out a chuckle.

"Anyone who is skilled in formations is a monster as far as I am

concerned. This Fuxi fellow, and that Keeper Everwood of your Seamless Gate...ugh. I really don't understand. How did they end up developing such troublesome and complicated formations?" The alien Outsider couldn't help but let out another sigh. "I don't have any interest in developing formations myself. Personal power is what matters the most, as far as I am concerned."

"Almighty Master." A voice rang out from outside.

The alien Outsider was startled, but Celestial Immortal Blackheaven let out a laugh. "Thearch Darkstill has arrived. It seems we are going to hear some good news."

"Darkstill is quite reliable when taking on missions." The alien Outsider glanced calmly towards the outside. Soon, Thearch Darkstill arrived before him, hurriedly falling to his knees with respect. "Master, as you ordered I did my best to either slay Ji Ning or lure him into the Forest of Dreams. However...Ji Ning is simply far too powerful. Your subordinate is truly incapable of this."

"Too powerful?" The nearby Celestial Immortal Blackheaven frowned. "He's a young fellow who has trained for less than a thousand years. How powerful could he possibly be?"

"Your subordinate sent the 'Eight-Armed Warfiend Formation' to deal with Ji Ning, but all 199 Empyrean Gods of the formation perished in battle without even being able to send any information back," Thearch Darkstill said. "Ji Ning is extremely cautious. There's no way for any of my minions to get close to him or to lure him anywhere."

The seated alien Outsider frowned. "Has he reached the fifth stage of swordforce?"

"Master, your subordinate sent nine bugbeasts to deal with Ji Ning. Would you like to see the results of that battle?" Thearch Darkstill asked.

"Yes." The alien Outsider nodded.

Thearch Darkstill immediately pointed towards the empty air next to him. Scenes of the battle instantly appeared and began to play in empty

air. This was what Thearch Darkstill had personally witnessed just now.

The entire hall was completely silent. Everyone was focused on the battle.

The nine bugbeasts appeared. Ji Ning rose to his feet and drew his sword.

His sword struck out, and a bugbeast was split apart into four pieces. The alien Outsider nodded and pronounced his judgment. "This sword-art is indeed proof that he has reached the fifth stage of swordforce."

The eight bugbeasts began to flee in different directions. Ji Ning pointed towards the heavens, causing a boundless amount of swordforce to descend and forming an entire world of swordforce. Then, he used a horrifying sword-art to massacre the bugbeasts... 'Sword Peacock'!

It was like a peacock spreading its feathers. It was a dazzlingly beautiful scene, and one which caused all the powerful figures in the hall to turn completely silent.

Only a long moment later did the seated alien Outsider let out a soft sigh. "How beautiful. What a beautiful sword. It has been a long time since I've seen such a beautiful sword-art. The last time I did see such a sword-art was when I was at the city of Hillfall, where I saw distant Chaos Immortals battling in the sky. That was the only time I've ever seen such beautiful sword-arts. He truly is the number one Sword Immortal of your Three Realms. This reputation...it is completely deserved!"

All the figures present nodded. This sword-art was a technique for committing butchery, but it was also an intoxicatingly beautiful technique.

"How could it be this powerful? How did he become even more powerful than he was back when he was in the Deerchaser world?" Celestial Immortal Blackheaven found this all quite hard to accept. "Back then, he still had to rely on the Envoy. Now, all by himself and when using just a single sword, he is able to unleash such tremendous power."

“Master, I have something to report.” Thearch Darkstill’s face suddenly changed.

“What is it?” The alien Outsider frowned. He had been entranced by the beauty of that sword-art; naturally, he was quite unhappy to be roused from his reverie.

Thearch Darkstill said hurriedly, “After Ji Ning slew my nine bugbeasts, he continued to advance. He’s now sensed ripples emanating from a battle which Kuafu’s squad is engaged in. He’s moving towards Kuafu’s squad at high speed and is going to join with them soon.”

Chapter 12: Joining Together

“He’s about to join together with Kuafu’s squad?” The alien Outsider drummed on the throne’s armrest with his fingers, then smiled as he looked at Celestial Immortal Blackheaven. “Blackheaven, Ji Ning truly is the undisputed number one Sword Immortal of the Three Realms. This sword-art alone ensures that there’s no way those useless minions of mine can deal with him. Even by himself, he’s very hard to deal with. Once he joins together with Kuafu, it’ll be even harder to deal with him. There’s nothing I can do. If the Seamless Gate wishes to stop him, I suggest you hurry.”

Blackheaven said hurriedly, “The strategy we agreed upon with you, Godfiend, was that we would make use of the inhospitable environment of the Primordial Ruinworld to kill as many of the True Gods and Daofathers of the Three Realms as possible. It isn’t time for the Seamless Gate to attack yet. Once we do, the Endwar shall immediately begin.”

“Hmph. Then we are out of options,” the alien Outsider said calmly.

.....

The Three Realms. Within a palace in the Allfiend world.

Sixteen True Gods and Daofathers were here, including the Lord of All Fiends, Keeper Everwood, Daomother Devilhand, the black-robed Godking, Daofather Netherjade, and others. Some had sent their true bodies, with others manifesting incarnations. The weakest figure present was still an elite Daofather.

“Master.” A voice rang out from outside.

“Blackheaven. Come in,” the Lord of All Fiends said.

Celestial Immortal Blackheaven entered, then said respectfully, “We just received a new intelligence report from the Primordial Ruinworlds.”

The seated True Gods and Daofathers all looked towards Blackheaven. The Lord of All Fiends said, “Speak.”

“Master, please take a look.” Celestial Immortal Blackheaven pointed

towards an empty space nearby. Instantly, scenes of a battle began to be displayed. It was the battle between Ji Ning and those nine bugbeasts. After watching the scene, Blackheaven was naturally able to reproduce it for the benefit of others.

“Ji Ning?”

“Ji Ning’s fighting against nine bugbeasts. From the looks of them, those bugbeasts should be quite powerful, at the level of True Gods.”

The major powers were paying close to attention to this fight. When they saw Ning easily slay a bugbeast with just a single sword-strike, they simply frowned. But when ‘Sword Peacock’ was displayed, all the major powers in the hall were stunned. In fact, looks of absolute rapture could be seen in the eyes of Daomother Devilhand and a few other Daofathers as she saw the beautiful technique.

“What a beautiful sword-art.” Daomother Devilhand let out a soft sigh. “It really is beautiful.”

“What a terrifying sword-art.” Keeper Everwood nodded as well.

“This is just a area-of-effect sword-art Ji Ning uses to attack a host of weaker foes. His close-combat skills are undoubtedly even more terrifying. He was able to easily kill that bugbeast without even using his rainbow swordforce; this means that strike just revealed a tiny portion of his true power.” The Lord of All Fiend became even more solemn. “Sword Immortal Darknorth of the Nuwa Alliance has now become one of our major foes. He’s no weaker than Daofather Fujū was!”

“He’s trained for a shorter period of time than Daofather Fujū had,” Keeper Everwood said. “He’s trained for less than a thousand years, but has reached such a level of power.”

“The efforts of our ‘Godking’ really were quite indispensable in helping Ji Ning to train so quickly,” Daomother Devilhand said mockingly as she glanced sideways at the ashen-faced Godking.

The black-robed Godking was filled with sullen resentment. When he saw that lovely sword-strike, even he felt uncontrollably mesmerized by

it. It was simply too beautiful.

The next moment, however, he remember that the person who had displayed that sword-strike was Ji Ning. Ji Ning was once a minor figure who he held in complete contempt, so much so that the Godking didn't even care that much about using Yu Wei as a chess piece. Who would've thought that this minor figure would have become even more powerful than him! Although he didn't want to admit it, he knew quite well that Ji Ning no longer needed to use any formations to fight with him. That sword-strike alone was proof that Ji Ning had vastly surpassed him. This sword-art alone ensured that Ji Ning was very close to the overlord level of power!

"No one could've imagined that Ji Ning would advance so rapidly. The actions the Godking took against him, such as the destruction of Yu Wei's soul...normally speaking, those actions should've cast a shadow over his heart and perhaps even thrown him into an eternal stupor, never to advance any further. The Godking's actions weren't wrong. Ji Ning...Ji Ning is simply too much of a monster," Daofather Augur said with a laugh.

"A shadow over his heart?" Daomother Devilhand shook her head. "I heard that during the Crimsonbright Realmwar, this dear Godking of ours tried to force Ji Ning to choose to join us. Instead, he broke through to the fourth stage of heartforce in the blink of an eye. This time, our Godking went straight to killing Yu Wei's soul...and in yet another blink of an eye, Ji Ning's nearly become an overlord-class figure. Last time in the Deerchaser world, Ji Ning had to rely on the Rahu Formation and his Envoy in order to reach this level of power. This time, he no longer has to rely on any external sources of help."

"Godking." Daomother Devilhand turned and smiled at him. "Some people are irrepressible. You simply can't beat them down. The more you pressure you place upon them, the more dazzling their performance shall be. Ji Ning is one such person."

"Thank you for your lesson, aunt-master." The black-robed Godking bowed towards her.

“Ji Ning has already turned into a serious problem for us.” The Lord of All Fiends looked at the others, then instructed, “Blackheaven, keep a close eye on him in the Primordial Ruinworld. If you can find a chance to kill him there, do so.”

“Yes,” Celestial Immortal Blackheaven assented respectfully.

.....

The Primordial Ruinworld. The Darkstill world.

A titanic foot that was tens of thousands of kilometers in size pierced through the skies, slamming downwards towards the land. Mountains and rivers alike were completely crushed and flattened by this foot as an enormous footprint was gouged into the earth.

The giant foot then quickly shrank in size, and a bare-chested, muscular man who was dressed in a fur loincloth appeared. He laughed loudly, “Ahaha, these dogshit formations sure are a pain in the ass. They seem so mysterious and profound, but when I put my foot down even the earth itself is blasted apart. Doesn’t that wreck those formations perfectly?”

“The ones you can destroy are all the weaker ones.” A golden-robed woman with draconic horns on her head laughed as she walked towards him.

“That was a bit anticlimactic. I wanted to spend a bit more time studying the mysteries of this formation.” A handsome, silver-haired, fan-wielding youth shook his head.

“Kuafu took advantage of the fact that he runs faster than me. Otherwise, I would’ve split that formation apart with a blow of my axe.” A massive headless Fiendgod walked next to them as well. This headless Fiendgod was bare-chested as well, but he had eyes where his nipples should have been and a mouth where his belly button should have been. His belly-mouth was speaking rather unhappily.

“Xingtian, I didn’t ‘run’ per se. I just stretched my leg out and stepped on that dogshit formation.” The muscular man holding a wooden staff in his hands was Kuafu. Kuafu laughed smugly, and he even twiddled his toes a

bit.

The six Fiendgods chatted and joked amongst themselves as they continued to cause destruction. Deadly formations? Screw'm. They'd first give them a chop of the axe or a good hard stomping.

When the six of them worked together, their actions were straightforward and brutal.

"Eh?" The handsome, fan-wielding youth's face changed slightly as he turned to look off into the distance. "Something's happening?"

The other five Fiendgods, upon hearing his words, all grew careful as they turned over as well. They knew very well that although their good friend 'Windfate' was an ordinary Daofather, his senses were incredibly acute. He could use the wind to sense many things which others could not sense. In fact, he was also very skilled at scrying on the workings of fate itself, which was why he was known as Daofather Windfate. In this squad, he was the best detector of danger; without him, these brutish figures would've easily been drawn into dangerous, trap-filled regions.

Swoosh. A black lightning serpent was flying towards them from afar.

"A Ninehorn Lightning Serpent?" Upon seeing the black serpent, all of them relaxed slightly.

"It's Sword Immortal Darknorth, Ji Ning." Xingtian laughed. "The only person who can use this [Ninehorn Lightning Serpent] technique in the Three Realms should be Ji Ning. But...it's a bit odd. Wasn't his true body destroyed by the Seamless Gate?"

"Patriarch Subhuti told me that Ji Ning would come, but I didn't expect him to come using the [Ninehorn Lightning Serpent]," a soft, gentle-looking maiden said.

Ning's figure appeared in midair above them, then began to descend.

"Ji Ning."

"Darknorth."

The six Fiendgods walked towards him in a very friendly manner.

“Respectful greetings to you,” Ning said hurriedly. He had something of a friendship with Xingtian the Heaven Punisher long ago, thanks to the latter permitting him to use the ‘Heaven Punisher Formation’. As for the other five, he had met four of them before. It was back when Exalted Celestial Thundergod and some other major powers had sought to learn the [Ninehorn Lightning Serpent] technique from him; back then, a large group of major powers had congregated around him.

True God Xingtian laughed. “Ji Ning, let me make the introductions. This fellow here is Kuafu, a barbarian who has warts for brains.”

“You make it sound like you are very refined and gentile,” Kuafu said with a laugh.

“Kuafu actually knows the word ‘gentile’? How unexpected.” The fan-wielding Daofather Windfate chortled.

“Ji Ning, Subhuti told me that you’d be coming. Not bad, not bad...it seems your true body is in perfect shape.” Kuafu reached out with his hand and patted Ning on the shoulders.

Xingtian continued with the introductions. “This is Daofather Windfate.”

Daofather Windfate folded his fan, then nodded and smiled at Ning.

“This is Empress Xi.” Kuafu pointed at the dragon-horned woman dressed in golden robes.

Ning nodded. Empress Xi was also a Fiendgod. She was actually the grand-daughter of the Ancestor Dragon. The Ancestor Dragon had nine sons. One of them, the Bi’an Tiger, had a daughter who he named Xi. No one expected that Xi would actually prove to be even more formidable than her father, and she eventually became an elite Daofather.

“This is Luwu.” Xingtian pointed at the honest-looking man.

“True God Luwu.” Ning greeted him.

Luwu smiled. He looked like the honest, straightforward man he was. He had become an Empyrean God long ago, and he had served as a guard

for quite a few different major powers. In fact, he had once been a guard and general for the Celestial Emperor which Xingtian had slain. When Xingtian had assaulted the Celestial Court, Luwu had attempted to stop him, only to fail.

After that great battle, Xingtian had finally made his breakthrough to become a True God. A few years later, however, the low-key Luwu had also silently, soundlessly broken through to become a True God.

“This is Graceful Peacock.” Xingtian pointed at the gentle-looking maiden. “She has four clones, and one of them is in each squad. This makes it easier for our squads to communicate with each other.”

“Greetings to you, Daomother Graceful Peacock,” Ning said.

Graceful Peacock had an extremely formidable elder brother, Mahamayuri of the Buddhist Sangha. During the Primordial Era, he had become a figure who was close to the overlord level of power. His savage reputation was known throughout the Primordial Era, but in this day and age he rarely showed himself. 1

Both Graceful Peacock and Mahamayuri were the children of the deceased Elder God known as the ‘Phoenix’.

Although Graceful Peacock was merely an ordinary Daomother, she had been able to cultivate her five peacock feathers into five separate clones, each of which had bodies like top-grade Protocosmic spirit-treasures that were completely unbreakable. She usually sent those clones out to adventure, while her true body was kept safe in the legendary Phoenix Palace.

“We’ve sent a total of four squads to destroy the Primordial Ruinworlds,” Kuafu said with a loud laugh. “Our squad completely consists of Fiendgods – Myself, Empress Xi, Windfate, Graceful Peacock, and Luwu. Lord Tathagata the Buddha is commanding a squad that is completely composed of Buddhas of the Buddhist Sangha; their squad has four total! Fuxi’s squad also has four members, each of whom is a major power of the human race. The final squad is led by Daoist Jade Cauldron, which consists of seven True Gods and Daofathers of the Daoist Path.”

“Now that you’ve joined us...hm. We’ve already decided upon a joint combination formation that we are using. I’m not exactly sure how we should work you into it.” Kuafu pondered on this matter.

These Daofather squads all came equipped with formations, so as to be able to unleash tremendous power in battle.

“How about this?” Xingtian said. “Ji Ning, just follow us. If you encounter anything dangerous, just stay inside our formation for now. We don’t have enough time to alter the formation for you right now.”

“Understood.” Ning nodded.

In truth, Xingtian and Kuafu were speaking in quite a delicate, tactful manner. Because all six of them were True Gods, when they unleashed their formation they were able to do in a very perfect manner. But now, Ji Ning had suddenly appeared. As they saw it, he was just an Empyrean God. He might have some special techniques, but if everyone else in the formation had True God divine power while Ning only had Empyrean God divine power, an imbalance would occur.

Ning had his own concerns as well. Xingtian and the others all had True God power, while he himself was a half-step Elder God. His divine power was even purer than theirs. If he joined their formation, it truly would cause an imbalance. It probably was indeed better for him to act independently for now.

“Be careful and stay close to us. The Primordial Ruinworld isn’t easy to deal with,” Kuafu advised. He actually cared quite deeply about Ji Ning, as Ji Ning had rendered tremendous merits to the Nuwa Alliance. However, Kuafu was quite puzzled as well...why had Ji Ning even come? Didn’t he know that he would just be slowing them down? Still, this question really wasn’t very appropriate to actually voice.

“I won’t cause any trouble.” Ning nodded.

“Alright. Let’s head out.” Kuafu gave the order, and the group of seven began to advance once more, smashing through all impediments that sought to bar their path.

1. Mahamayuri is also known as the Peacock Wisdom King, and is often shown as being or riding a peacock.

Chapter 13: A Dangerous Zone

Whoosh! The squad continued to fly forwards, smashing through all obstacles. Even if they did encounter any problems, Kuafu would stretch out his massive leg across tens of thousands of kilometers and flatten anything in front of them.

When Ji Ning had been travelling alone, he had suffered occasional attacks from the likes of the nine bugbeasts and the Fiendgod formation, but now that he was alongside Kuafu and the rest of the True Gods things were much simpler.

“Does this feel easy?” Xingtian and Ning were flying shoulder-to-shoulder atop a cloud, and he smiled as he asked Ning this question.

Ning glanced at Xingtian’s belly-mouth. He was quite calm; he himself had once commanded a Heaven Punisher Formation before, after all. Laughing, Ning replied, “Yes. I haven’t even had a chance to fight.”

“Kuafu is the fastest person here. None of us can overtake him.” Xingtian chuckled. “And you should know that the alien Outsiders of the Primordial Ruinworld are weaker than the experts of the Three Realms to begin with. This is why they simply don’t dare to fight against us head-on when we attack. Their only recourse is to use some of the more dangerous features of the local terrain to deal with us. The Darkstill world, however, is one of the top-ranked worlds of the Primordial Ruinworld. Worlds like the Darkstill world that were taken over by powerful races are actually the least dangerous worlds of all.”

Ning nodded. It made sense. The powerful races would want to take over the best places to live. The truly deadly places weren’t suitable for life to flourish. The Three Realms, for example, was a wonderful place to live, but it had been taken over by the Nuwa Alliance and the Seamless Gate.

“That’s why we can be fairly relaxed here at the Darkstill world. Once we reach some truly dangerous worlds, however, things will become much tenser.” Xingtian instructed, “When the time comes, you’ll need to be very careful. There are some extremely dangerous regions which will

spell guaranteed doom for even overlord-class Daofathers who are trapped within them.”

“Understood,” Ning replied solemnly.

It was very true that there were some places which would spell certain doom for even overlords!

The Primordial Ruinworld had ten famous danger zones, and the ‘Voidsea’ was ranked first and foremost amongst the ten.

The ‘waters’ of the Voidsea consisted of countless shattered pieces of voidspace. The pieces of voidspace all clashed against each other, generating terrifying levels of destructive power. Even top-grade Protocosmic spirit-treasures would be ground to dust by them! Only Chaos treasures would withstand their destructive force.

To this day, no one had ever dared to enter the Voidsea and face that terrifying destructive force. Not even Mother Nuwa had ever given it a try. Perhaps she gained the power to survive it after becoming a World God, but why would she be willing to take on such an unnecessary risk?

The squad continued to advance. Two days later.

“Eh?” Ning stared downwards. There was an enormous city of buildings beneath them. There were even some dazzlingly beautiful palaces amongst the strange alien edifices, but all of them were in wretched condition. Many of those buildings had clearly been chopped or blasted apart.

Kuafu glanced downwards, then let out a loud laugh. “Judging from those sword-scars, Daoist Jade Cauldron must have come here. He’s quite fast.”

“It was indeed Daoist Jade Cauldron’s squad which destroyed this ancestral homeland of the Darkstill race,” Graceful Peacock said. One of her clones was in each squad, and so she knew exactly what was going on where.

“The ancestral homeland of the Darkstill race...” Ning couldn’t help but secretly sigh. This was a war for survival. For the sake of the Nuwa

Alliance's survival, their only options were to force their enemies to flee, to surrender...or to be completely wiped out. There were no other options.

"Come. We've spent five days here at the Darkstill world and have completely scoured it clean. Time to go to the next world," Kuafu said. "Let's go."

"Let's go." Ning and the others immediately continued on their journey.

This journey was quite an uneventful one. Even when they did encounter some minor problems, Kuafu and the others would deal with them. There was no need for Ning to intervene at all, and Ning was in no rush to do so. He had come to the Primordial Ruinworld to help fight and help them win. When they truly needed him, he would make his move. In fact, if they could win the entire war without him revealing his true power, that would be even better.

Ning had always been quite calm. Now that he had reached the overlord level of power, he had become even calmer and more self-assured than before.

"Those words I heard in the past were true. Only when one has become truly powerful does one have the right to be relaxed and self-assured in dealing with all things," Ning murmured to himself.

.....

The Three Realms. Allclans Palace, the imperial palace of the Primordial Imperial Clan, also known as the imperial palace of the Yu the Great's clan.

During the Primordial Era, the human clans had summoned all of their major powers to come here. When the human clans had reached the true zenith of their power, they had been the rulers of the entire Primordial World. Many Fiendgods such as Xingtian or the Raindragon had long ago opted to stand alongside the human race.

Inside the palace were the Three Sovereigns of Mankind, the leaders of Daoism and Buddhism, Patriarch Subhuti, great divinity Houyi, various elite Daofathers of the Daoist Path and Buddhist Sangha, and a number of

unaffiliated Daofathers. They had gathered here more than half a year ago. Ever since the war against the Primordial Ruinworld had started, they had gathered here.

But of course, most only sent incarnations or clones! The reason they were gathered here was to ensure that they could all mobilize together at a moment's notice.

"Fuxi's squad has already entered the extremely dangerous 'Thousand Mountains' world," Suiren said. "This is the most dangerous world they have encountered since they launched their assault against the Primordial Ruinworld!"

"Those alien Outsiders are quite crafty." Daoist Three Purities nodded. "They've been unwilling to fight head-on, and we haven't been able to find any of their true headquarters. We've already finished destroying the easy targets, those safer worlds. Now, our only option is to assault the extremely dangerous ones."

"As I see it!" Suddenly, a muscular, black-armored figure seated below him boomed out in a deep voice. "Ji Ning's sudden addition to the strike team of Daofathers is going to be a problem. Things were fine in the first few months because they were only dealing with the safe worlds; in fact, he didn't even need to help out, as my old brother Kuafu and the others dealt with everything! But now they are entering the Thousand Mountains world, and that is a dangerous place indeed. When something dangerous happens, Kuafu and the others might not even be able to protect themselves, to say nothing of Ji Ning. When that happens, Ji Ning will end up slowing them down and exposing them!"

"Although I dislike Thundergod's personality," a skinny old man with an extraordinary demeanor said, "His words aren't unreasonable. We sent out those squads after careful discussion, and every member of the squad can join together into a combination formation. But with Ji Ning thrown into the mix...no matter which squad he joins, he won't be able to work with their combination formations. At this point in time, he really could easily become a burden to them. I'm worried that he's going to make things harder for Kuafu and Xingtian's team."

The major powers seated below all began to speak their thoughts.

A few months ago, when Ji Ning had first entered the Primordial Ruinworld, they had discussed this matter. However, things weren't quite so dangerous back then as the squads hadn't encountered any of the more dangerous worlds. None of them opposed Ji Ning's presence; his master was Subhuti, after all, while his senior apprentice-brother was Houyi. They had to give these two figures some face.

"Subhuti." After being silent for a long moment, Daoist Three Purities turned his head to look at Patriarch Subhuti.

Shennong turned to look at him as well.

Although they all liked Ji Ning very much, this was an extremely important undertaking. Personal feelings could not be allowed to interfere with their decisions. They had to make the best decisions possible for the alliance.

"Haha..." Subhuti began to laugh.

The major powers present all looked towards Subhuti in confusion.

"Subhuti, what are you laughing at?" Exalted Celestial Thundergod frowned.

Subhuti glanced sideways at Thundergod, then said, "Ji Ning definitely won't become a burden."

"Oh?"

Shennong, Daoist Three Purities, Suiren, and the others all revealed curious looks on their faces. The major powers seated below them began to whisper amongst themselves as well.

Subhuti chuckled again but said nothing else.

"As inscrutable and mysterious as ever." Daoist Three Purities shook his head.

"When the time comes, you will know." Subhuti raised a white eyebrow at the group. Houyi, seated next to him, revealed a hint of a smile. He had known Subhuti for far, far too long. He knew exactly what type of a

personality his master had.

The major powers continued to chat and jest with each other. For people as long-lived as them, a conversation or a debate about the Dao could easily last for thousands of years. In the past, before the war had begun, two of them might spend a century on a single game of chess.

Just half a day later.

“Not good.” Graceful Peacock was seated below them, and in this moment her beautiful, gentle face changed dramatically. “Everyone!”

Instantly, all the major powers turned their heads to look at Graceful Peacock. Four of her clones were with the four squads while the fifth one was here at the Allclans Palace. She was responsible for sending and delivering messages.

Upon seeing the heavy look on her face, all the major powers felt their hearts clench.

“Just now, Kuafu’s team was trapped inside a danger zone, the ‘Earthmoan Mountain’.”

“Earthmoan Mountain?” All of the major powers were shocked. Earthmoan Mountain was an extremely famous danger zone. Long ago, when the Daofathers of the Three Realms had entered the Primordial Ruinworld to test themselves, some had died there!

“Earthmoan Mountain is extremely dangerous.” Daoist Three Purities immediately said, “I’ve been there before, and I ended up being trapped for more than three thousand years. Have Tathagata go to them right away. Tathagata has the best chance of them all for overcoming Earthmoan Mountain.”

“Alright.” Graceful Peacock nodded frantically. “I’ve already informed Lord Buddha. Lord Buddha and the other three are heading there right now.”

.....

The Primordial Ruinworld. The Thousand Mountains world.

Ning had spent more than three months here in the Primordial Ruinworld. He had followed Kuafu's team this entire time and had experienced no real danger thus far at all.

"This is the Thousand Mountains world. We have to be careful," Graceful Peacock warned.

"Ahahaha, if any danger appears, I'll smush it with my foot!" Kuafu hoisted up his wooden staff as he laughed loudly, but after laughing he still said to Daofather Windfate, "Windfate, keep a close watch on things."

"Right." Daofather Windfate nodded.

The seven of them were flying atop a cloud, and the land around them was filled with countless mighty mountains.

"Why do I suddenly have the feeling that we just went past this mountain a while ago?" Ning suddenly pointed towards the front.

"Eh?!" Kuafu stared at him, then took a close look as well. He then nodded repeatedly. "Right. We just went past this place."

"Not good." Daofather Windfate concentrated for a moment, then the look on his face completely changed. "This is a formation that uses mountain ranges as the base. This is an extremely large formation, and it is extremely hard to detect. They must've switched just a few of the nearby mountains. Even I didn't notice anything at all earlier."

"We are already trapped inside a formation?" Xingtian was surprised.

"We are already inside." Daofather Windfate nodded.

"What should we do?" Kuafu hurriedly asked.

"Two options," Daofather Windfate said. "One, we forcibly destroy the formation by wrecking all those mountain peaks. If we do that, we'll be able to leave. But this should be a formation that was set up by Keeper Everwood, and he's extremely skilled in the usage of plants and rocks. If he was the one to make this formation...judging from how large it is, we probably won't be able to break it apart. The second option is to solve and

break the formation itself, but we can't do that either. Perhaps only Fuxi would be able to do that."

As soon as his words came out...

Thump. It was like a heartbeat that rang out from deep within the ground.

Thump. Thump. Thump. One deep heartbeat after another rang out, echoing throughout the area. The 'mountain ranges' around them suddenly disappeared, transforming into endless amounts of foul water that flowed out in rivers and creeks.

The cloud which Ning's group was on had actually been completely surrounded by the reeking water.

"T-this...this is Earthmoan Mountain." Daofather Windfate's face instantly turned completely ashen. "Too late. It's all too late."

"We actually ended up being drawn into Earthmoan Mountain without even knowing it." Luwu's face had changed as well.

All of them felt their heartrates quicken.

"What a profound formation." Ning said softly, "We didn't notice anything at all earlier...and by the time we did, we had already been lured into Earthmoan Mountain."

"Lord Buddha has already been notified. He's on his way right now," Graceful Peacock said hurriedly.

"Be careful, everyone. No matter what, don't let yourself get separated." Kuafu growled savagely, "This is the most dangerous place we have encountered since entering the Primordial Ruinworld. Even if Lord Buddha comes, he'll still need time to break apart Earthmoan Mountain! We need to hang on and endure until he manages to break us free. If we cannot...then we will die in here."

"Right." Ning and the rest of the six all nodded. They now all had solemn looks on their faces. At a time like this, no one dared to be overconfident.

“The cries of the earth have already begun,” Graceful Peacock said.
“When the cries of the earth reach a crescendo, deadly danger shall descend upon us.”

Thump! Yet another earthen heartbeat rang out, this one even louder than the previous ones. Even the endless flows of foul water around them seemed to shudder.

Chapter 14: Earthmoan Mountain

Lord Tathagata the Buddha and his three companions were flying through the air like an enormous streak of golden light as they rapidly advanced towards Earthmoan Mountain.

“Graceful Peacock, can they keep holding?” Tathagata sent mentally.

There were countless beings living in Tathagata’s [Buddha-Realm Within the Palm], with one of Graceful Peacock’s clones being there as well.

“The heartbeat sounds are rapidly becoming stronger and louder. When the sounds reach a crescendo, the attacks will begin. Right now all of us are waiting carefully, but we have yet to be attacked,” Graceful Peacock replied from within the Buddha-realm.

“You have to be careful.” Tathagata said a few more words, then turned to the three Buddhas by his side. “You should also enter my Buddha-realm for now as well. I’ll be able to travel more quickly that way.”

“Yes, Lord Buddha,” the other three Buddhas replied. Tathagata was the undisputed leader of the Buddhist community.

Tathagata waved his hand and collected those three Buddhas. Immediately after doing so, the midair golden streak of light surrounding him became even quicker as it flew towards Earthmoan Mountain.

.....

Within the castle located deep inside the Primordial Ruinworld.

“Master, success! Kuafu’s squad has already been lured into Earthmoan Mountain,” the skinny elder said jubilantly.

Godfiend Witherspike, seated atop his throne, let out a soft chuckle. “When we make a move, we have to make a big one! We let these bumpkins from the Three Realms have too easy a time of it earlier. Now, it’s time to give them a hard hit.”

“The Thousand Mountains world is a world which both we and the

Seamless Gate have spent enormous time, effort, and resources building up. The entire world is a huge trap. The Nuwa Alliance obviously knows that, but they still have to charge straight inside.” The red-bearded elder let out a laugh. “They can’t locate us. All they can do is wreck the entire Primordial Ruinworld in their hunt. They have to assault and destroy every single world. It’s very possible that we’ll be able to wipe out two or three of their squads here at Thousand Mountains world.”

“Kuafu’s squad should be done for, at least.” Godfiend Witherspike nodded slowly. “As for the other three...let’s see how talented they are.”

“Ji Ning.” Celestial Immortal Blackheaven remained standing on his feet, staring at the scene being played out in midair. It was a scene showing Earthmoan Mountain, with Kuafu’s squad having already been trapped inside of it. Celestial Immortal Blackheaven let out a cold laugh. “Now that you’ve entered Earthmoan Mountain, I want to see just how you’ll survive this one!”

“Master, Buddha Tathagata is advancing rapidly towards Earthmoan Mountain,” the towering, muscular, golden-armored figure suddenly said.

“Hmph. Keeper Everwood personally set up the formations around Earthmoan Mountain, and the formations are already activated and constantly transforming. Once Tathagata charges into the formation, he’ll virtually have no chance of locating Earthmoan Mountain unless he actually destroys the formation itself. Given his power, he might actually be able to do that...but he’ll need time. By the time he succeeds, Kuafu’s squad would’ve died long ago.” Godfiend Witherspike smiled, licking his lower lips with his bright red tongue.

He, the exalted Godfiend, had been biding his time for far too long. This title, ‘Godfiend’...it was a title that had been won through countless seas of blood and mountains of severed flesh!

.....

Within Earthmoan Mountain.

THUMP!

An extremely loud heartbeat rang out from under the ground, and the sound seemed to smash against the hearts of Ji Ning and the others. The entire team floated in midair, carefully watching their surroundings.

“Ji Ning, the six of us have set up a formation; we can work together to defend against any sneak attacks. You, however, don’t have anything protecting you. I think you should enter an estate-treasure for now. After we escape from Earthmoan Mountain, you can come out once more.” Kuafu’s group of six had already joined together into an enormous formation, and they were sharing their divine power with each other. All of them were surrounded by rings of golden light.

“No need.” Ning shook his head.

Kuafu frowned slightly upon seeing this. “This is a critical situation. You can’t be headstrong, Ji Ning.”

“No need to worry about me, fellow Daoist Kuafu. When my true body was destroyed by the Seamless Gate, I still ended up surviving, right?” Ning looked at Kuafu.

Kuafu was briefly startled, then nodded. “If you aren’t willing to hide, fine. How about this? Stay inside of our formation. If there any attacks come your way, the formation will be able to help you block a few blows. This formation protects against external attacks but not internal attacks. You’ll still be able to fight back from inside the formation.”

“Alright.” Ning nodded in acceptance.

Kuafu, Xingtian, Empress Xi, Windfate, Graceful Peacock, Luwu. These six True Gods were sharing their divine power with each other. Rings of golden light were surrounding them, helping to defend against any dangers, and Ning was located within the formation itself.

The six True Gods exchanged glances with each other, feeling quite resigned. As they saw it, this Sword Immortal Darknorth was being far too rash and arrogant. Earthmoan Mountain was such an incredibly dangerous place that even the six of them had to be extremely careful. In fact, they had even asked Lord Buddha to come rescue them. Ji Ning, however, insisted on staying outside...ugh! This overconfidence stemmed

from the fact that he simply hadn't trained for long enough!

Thump! Thump! Thump! Suddenly, the 'pulse' began to quicken.

The illusions around them began to change as well. Previously, they had been surrounded by endless tides of foul water. Now, it suddenly changed to a dense thicket of trees. Ning and the six were all standing within the thicket.

"Hurry up and leave. Fly out of the thicket," Kuafu said hurriedly.

Swoosh! All seven of them strove to fly out, but no matter how hard or how quickly they flew, they remained trapped within the thicket.

"We won't be able to fly out. Without being able to see through the illusions of Earthmoan Mountain, there's no way we can leave it at all." Daofather Windfate shook his head after taking another look. "When Daoist Three Purities was trapped here, he was able to rely on his incredible power to survive against the dangers present. Despite that, he was still trapped here for more than three thousand years before he was able to see the true face of Earthmoan Mountain and leave it."

"These are all illusions." Graceful Peacock was worried as well.

"We aren't able to see through them and see the true face of Earthmoan Mountain," Xingtian said with concern.

Ning carefully inspected the surrounding area as well.

Earthmoan Mountain was extremely famous. Once you entered it, you would face countless changing illusions and be perpetually trapped by them. Major powers might try to fly out with all their might, but they would remain within Earthmoan Mountain, unable to escape.

There were only two methods for leaving this place. The first was to rely on overwhelming raw power to annihilate the entire Earthmoan Mountain! However, not even Daoist Three Purities had been able to destroy this bizarre place. Most likely, only World Gods like Mother Nuwa would be able to accomplish it. There was no chance whatsoever that Ning's group would be able to do it.

The second method was to do what Daoist Three Purities did; to see through the illusions and see the truth of Earthmoan Mountain. It would then be possible to fly out!

Lord Tathagata the Buddha was extremely skilled in seeing through illusions. The Buddhists were all quite skilled in illusions to begin with.

Bang! Suddenly, a terrifying attack descended, stabbing straight towards True God Luwu. The layers of golden light protecting True God Luwu were instantly pierced through! Judging from the way in which the piercing occurred, it appeared as the attack came from an awl-shaped object.

True God Luwu was so frightened that he immediately lashed out with his whip to block while frantically dodging.

Slash!

True God Luwu's flank was sliced open. A large bloody wound appeared on his side, but his divine power quickly healed it.

"Everyone, be careful. Earthmoan Mountain's attacks are very powerful," True God Luwu said hurriedly. "The formation is unable to completely block it. However, the formation is still able to whittle away at its power a bit. If it wasn't for the formation, I wouldn't have merely lost a chunk of flesh; I would've been ripped in half."

"Be careful," Daofather Windfate said solemnly. "It looks like we are surrounded by a thicket of trees, but all of that is illusory. The true scene is that of those strange objects flying towards us and attacking us."

Ning frowned as well.

Despite being weakened by their protective formation, that strange object was still able to easily wound a True God. This was simply far too terrifying. The worst part of it was...they had no idea where it had come from. By the time they were able to notice it, its attack would have already arrived as well.

"What should I do?" Ning carefully scanned his surroundings, his eyes blazing with torch-light. He used the [Torch-Dragon's Eye] to carefully

scan the area, but the only result was that the trees and the leaves around them became even sharper and more in-focus. He could now even see the leafy veins! But alas, he couldn't find any traces of an illusion at all.

“To see through the illusions and see the truth...”

“How am I supposed to do that? When Daoist Three Purities was trapped here, he was also unable to leave until he saw through the illusions and saw the truth.” Ning frowned. “But how?”

Ning was carefully inspecting his surroundings with his physical vision, his coresense, and even his heartforce. All his senses, however, were ‘seeing’ exactly the same things his eyes were seeing. It was as though the trees and the thicket around them actually were real. In truth, it made sense; even Daoist Three Purities had been trapped here for three thousand years before being able to escape. Seeing through the illusions would be no easy feat!

Rumble...

Ning's heartforce rippled out from him in a series of waves as Ning used the heartforce scrying technique which World God Northrest had transmitted to him, causing his heartforce scanned through every inch of space around him. This scanning technique could be said to be the most detailed such technique in the Three Realms. It truly surpassed all other similar techniques; Ning had searched the memories of the Fiendgods and Immortals of the Pangaea prisoners but was still unable to find any heartforce scrying technique that could compare to his.

Suddenly, his rippling heartforce seemed to detect a slight wave of motion.

Bang!

An invisible object once more stabbed straight through the layers of golden light and pierced towards Empress Xi.

Chapter 15: That Tiny Wave

Empress Xi only noticed the attack after the strange object had torn through all those layers of protection. Her face instantly changed. “Not good!” She hurriedly dodged while brandishing her sleeves to block. Clang! The sharp object struck against her sleeves, then flew off towards another direction.

“Be careful, everyone.” Empress Xi said hurriedly, “It is too fast; you can’t let yourself be caught offguard!”

“Xingtian, do you have any more shield-type treasures?” True God Luwu asked hurriedly.

“I do.” Xingtian produced a small buckler in his hand, then sent it flying towards True God Luwu. It rapidly increased in size, becoming nearly half his height. True God Luwu grabbed the buckler with one hand, using his other to continue holding onto his metal whip.

Xingtian was similarly holding a buckler in one hand and his Heaven Punisher Axe in the other. He hurriedly asked, “Anyone else need a buckler?” As he spoke his gaze couldn’t help but turn towards Ning, located in the center of the formation.

Of the seven, Kuafu was the strongest. Xingtian and Empress Xi were next, but Xingtian already had a buckler while Empress xi was skilled in using her sleeves.

Next came Graceful Peacock, Windfate, and Luwu. Luwu had already acquired a buckler, while Daofather Windfate used his fan. The fan could also be used as a shield, and Daofather Windfate would actually be able to unleash more power with his fan than with a buckler. As for Graceful Peacock, her ‘body’ had been forged from a peacock feather that was comparable to a top-grade Protocosmic spirit-treasure. She was actually safer than any of them.

As Xingtian saw it, Ji Ning was a wielder of the sword. The sword was an offensive weapon; defensively speaking, it was comparatively lacking. He felt that Ji Ning would most likely need a buckler.

“I don’t need one just yet.” Ning smiled and shook his head.

“Be careful,” Xingtian warned, then fell silent.

Attacks continued to rain down upon them from those invisible objects. The six True Gods all guarded carefully against the attacks, and they even decided to shrink the perimeter of their formation so as to better protect Ji Ning within it.

The six Fiendgods worked together to defend against nineteen waves of attacks. Ji Ning, by contrast, had things easy; protected in the center of the formation, he didn’t suffer any attacks at all.

“Eh? It seems to have ended,” Graceful Peacock said softly.

“The cries of the earth are growing softer,” Kuafu agreed.

Thump. Thump.

The heartbeat ringing out from deep underground had indeed grown quieter.

“After a period of time, the sound will grow louder again and the attacks will start anew,” Kuafu said. “Let’s rest for now and prepare to deal with the next wave of attacks.”

“Right.” The Fiendgods all had rather ugly looks on their faces.

The invisible attacks were simply too powerful, and they were also extraordinarily unpredictable. During the nineteen waves of attacks, True God Luwu had been injured three times, Daofather Windfate had been injured twice, Empress Xi and Xingtian had each been injured once, while Kuafu, Ning, and Graceful Peacock were uninjured. Each time they suffered an injury, they had to use a large amount of divine power to heal it.

Using divine power to heal one’s body was extremely taxing. As more time passed the divine power would be used up, at which point they wouldn’t even be able to maintain the formation! The reason why they had been able to survive the nineteen waves of attacks was because the formation served to weaken the power of those attacks. If they were to

face those attacks head on, even Kuafu would be in danger of dying.

Everyone could sense death impending. The atmosphere naturally turned quite grim.

“This guy Ji Ning...all of us are so nervous, but he’s actually daydreaming?!” True God Luwu gave Ning, still located at the center of the formation, a hard look. Ning stood in the center, eyes completely blank. Clearly, his mind was elsewhere and he was completely preoccupied.

“Ugh.” True God Luwu was an amiable and honest fellow. He didn’t say anything. “We’ll do our best. If we can protect Ji Ning, we will. If we end up dying, there will be nothing more that we can do. He’s just too young.”

Ning continued to stand there, pondering to himself. “Each time there is an attack, especially when the attack draws close, I can dimly sense a hint of a ripple spread out. Clearly, the power of the attacks is so great that at a close distance, there’s no way for it to completely avoid my senses. However, I can just sense a tiny wave each time. There’s no way for me to completely verify the exact location the strange object is coming from.”

Those ripples were perhaps coming from the strange objects, but when those invisible things attacked they instantly arrived before their target, giving the defenders no time to spare.

“I need to verify and track the direction from which each attack is going to come.”

“Given how powerful these attacks are, they have to cause at least a tiny bit of spatial disruption.” Ning stared at the thickets around them. “Still... the illusions around us are simply too realistic, and the area around us is filled with multiple ripples that mask the ones coming from those strange objects.”

“What I need to do is to separate the ripples caused by the illusions from the ripples caused by the strange objects.”

Ning had been watching closely during the last ten-plus attacks, but he was still unable to ascertain exactly where each attack was going to come

from.

Thump! The heartbeat coming from deep beneath the earth suddenly began to grow stronger once more.

Thump! Thump! Thump! The heartbeats began to quicken and strengthen.

“Be careful, everyone. The next wave of attacks from Earthmoan Mountain is about to begin,” Kuafu barked.

“Right.” The other five True Gods hurriedly acknowledged him. They pumped more energy into their formation, staying on maximum alert.

As for Ning, his eyes were lidded as he circulated his soul heartforce technique, using it to attune himself to all the many varied ripples that that were occurring around them. There were ripples caused by the wind, by light, by spatial movement, by scent...Ning was able to separate out the spatial ripples, but what he needed to do right now was to identify the specific spatial ripples being generated by those strange objects.

Even for a major power like Ning, this was incredibly difficult!

Even Daoist Three Purities had ended up spending more than three thousand years before accomplishing this. Ning’s advantage lay in the formidable techniques taught to him by World God Northrest!

Whoosh!

Swish!

Slash!

The invisible attacks began to descend upon them once more.

Kuafu, Xingtian, and the rest all did their best to defend against the attacks, using all of their power.

“That seems...to be a spatial ripple caused by those strange objects...” Ning remained inside the formation, eyes half-lidded as he continued to carefully attune to the surrounding area.

“Ji Ning, I really think you should enter an estate-treasure,” Xingtian

bellowed. He was fairly close to Ji Ning on a personal level. Ning, however, didn't respond to him, instead continuing to sweep the area with his senses.

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The Three Realms, the Allclans Palace of the Primordial Imperial Clan. Many major powers were gathered in this place.

"Hurry." Graceful Peacock frantically rose to her feet and said, "This is the third time Earthmoan Mountain is attacking us. True God Luwu has been gravely injured, and his divine power is almost used up. Once he's completely dry, there will be no way for them to maintain the formation. Kuafu and the others are about to die in Earthmoan Mountain!"

"Tathagata." Daoist Three Purities looked towards him.

"I'm working on breaking the formation," Lord Buddha said hurriedly. "This should be a formation which Keeper Everwood spent enormous amounts of effort on. He's used the countless mountains in the area to serve as his formation-bases. Although I'm breaking it apart as fast as I can, I still need more time."

"There are no other options." Tathagata shook his head. "Even if all of you head there right away, you'll first have to reach their location. By the time you get there, I would've broken through the formation long ago."

Daoist Three Purities nodded. It was true. Thousand Mountains world was a place filled with countless dangers. There was no way to teleport through the Void to arrive at that place. Ji Ning, Tathagata, Fuxi, and the others had all been forced to slowly fly their way there.

"Fuxi is the best at defeating formations, but he's been tied down by those alien Outsiders of the Primordial Ruinworld," Graceful Peacock said hurriedly. "There's no way for him to get there in time either."

"Everwood..." The seated Daofather Subhuti had an ugly look on his face.

In war, one of the most terrifying possibilities was fighting in an arena of your enemy's choosing.

Their enemies had already made complete preparations in the Primordial Ruinworld. The Nuwa Alliance knew that...but no matter what, they wouldn't be willing to give the Primordial Ruinworld the chance to ambush the victors of the Endwar. If for no other reason than to uproot an ally of the Seamless Gate, they had to wipe out the Primordial Ruinworld! However, they were indeed worried about the deadly environment and illusions located within the Primordial Ruinworld, which was why they had only sent two of their overlord-class figures in this campaign. The other major powers would all remain on guard in the Three Realms. If something unexpected happened, they would be able to handle it.

"I've already unleashed all of my dharma-bodies. I'll be able to break the formation soon," Tathagata said with a solemn look on his face.

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Lord Buddha's squad truly had gone all out.

The other three Buddhas who had come with him had assembled into a formation. Their holy light spread out in every direction as they launched all sorts of attacks against the land, each strike filled with the power to shatter the heavens and wreck the earth.

As for Lord Buddha, he had switched into a different form, unleashing all three of his bodies.

These three bodies were his Sakyamuni body, his Great Sun Buddha body 1, and his Medicine Buddha body 2. The three of them sent their mighty Buddha-palms smashing down from the skies, shattering apart one mountain range after another with each blow. However, each time some of the mountain ranges would once more be reborn from the natural energy of Heaven and Earth. This was clearly the power of the formation at work.

Tathagata had been born a True God of Primordial Chaos.

During the Primordial Era, he had shattered his own soul, leaving behind just a tendril of his truesoul to be reincarnated into the human race. He had become Sakyamuni, and as a result had been truly reborn.

He finally was able to reach the pinnacle of power, fully mastering the five Heavenly Daos of Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth. This allowed him to manifest five mighty dharma-bodies! However, actually using these five dharma-bodies consumed a terrifying amount of energy. He would only activate them all when he was truly going all-out.

He had brought three of his five dharma-bodies in this campaign against the Primordial Ruinworld, leaving behind two of them to guard the Three Realms.

Daoist Three Purities had his 'Three Pure Ones' technique. Tathagata, in term, had five dharma-bodies, with the most powerful naturally being his true Sakyamuni body.

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"Tathagata's quite powerful." Godfiend Witherspike let out a sigh as he saw the scene playing out of Tathagata breaking apart the formation with utterly ruinous power. "These aboriginals only have inferior Ki Refining techniques; they are clearly Ancestral Immortals, but only third-tier ones! And yet, despite that, the most monstrously talented amongst them have gained incredible insights into the Dao."

"Fuxi's been tied down for now as well."

"Keeper Everwood's formations are quite formidable. Even if other major powers were to make their way over, they would still need to spend a considerable amount of time to break through the formation. After doing so, they would then need to actually enter Earthmoan Mountain! Earthmoan Mountain is filled with countless illusions; to actually locate Kuafu's squad will require time as well. I estimate that Kuafu's squad should already be at the verge of breaking down," Godfiend Witherspike mused softly to himself.

"Given how furious and frantic Tathagata is in trying to break through the formation as quickly as possible, Kuafu's squad should be close to being done for," Celestial Immortal Blackheaven said with a laugh.

All of them were just guessing, of course. Earthmoan Mountain was one of the most hazardous of regions that had been naturally created from

the Primordial Ruinworld. Even the alien Outsiders were unable to scry inside of it to see what was happening.

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The situation inside Earthmoan Mountain truly had turned grim. True God Luwu and Daofather Windfate had ashen looks on their faces, and their bodies were covered with bloody wounds. They no longer had enough divine power to repair and heal their bodies.

Swish! Yet another ruthless, cruel attack by an invisible object.

Ning's eyes had been lidded this entire time, but now they suddenly opened. His eyes sparkled like the stars as he murmured softly to himself, "I finally found it."

*

1. The Sanskrit name is 'Vairocana'.
2. The Sanskrit name is Bhaisajyaguru.

Chapter 16: Wokejade Realm

“Luwu, Windfate, give up for now. I’ll take you into my estate-treasure,” Kuafu shouted.

“No!” Although True God Luwu was usually an amiable and honest fellow, he was currently quite resolute and unyielding. “Kuafu, you know very well how dangerous Earthmoan Mountain is. The only reason we are still alive is because of the formation. Once we enter the estate-treasure, the two of us will be able to live for a bit longer, true. But the rest of you will no longer have the formation protecting you. You won’t be able to hold on for much longer.”

“Every single cell of my body is formed from divine power. Although I’m out of actual power, I can still convert my body into divine power. I can still hold,” True God Luwu growled.

“We’ll keep holding.” Daofather Windfate nodded, his eyes filled with cold resolve. “Kuafu, don’t go soft on us. There’s no way out for the six of us. This campaign against the Primordial Ruinworld is actually the final precursor to the Endwar. There will always be casualties in war. It is now my time to die, and I won’t shirk back.”

Kuafu, Empress Xi, Xingtian, and Graceful Peacock all felt quite torn. However, they understood that this was indeed the best decision when keeping the big picture in perspective. The bodies of True God Luwu and True God Windfate were indeed manifested from large amounts of divine power. They absolutely were capable of continuing to hold on, but only at a price...the price being that they could die at any moment from an attack!

“Keep holding,” Kuafu growled.

“Protect Luwu and Windfate!” Xingtian let out a howl, then turned to look towards Ji Ning. “Ji Ning, do your best to help Windfate and Luwu.”

Xingtian had always felt very well-disposed towards Ji Ning. It was one thing for Ji Ning not to help out when they were travelling around, but things were now different; they were trapped here in the deadly environs

of Earthmoan Mountain. Ji Ning was quite safe at the center of the formation, but he hadn't even helped out a single time! This caused Xingtian to feel quite displeased.

Swish!

Ning suddenly made his move.

In a single instant, he stepped out of the center of the formation. He actually stabbed out with his sword, and a dazzling rainbow aura of swordforce sparkled around the tip of the sword.

Kuafu, Xingtian, and the rest of the six True Gods were instantly dumbfounded.

Ji Ning had actually left the formation? Kuafu and the others were about to immediately rebuke him for doing so.

But he had then struck out with his sword? Why did he do that?

Rainbow-colored sword-light? T-that was...

Ning's sudden actions had caused the six True Gods to be instantly and completely stupefied.

Clang! A clanking sound rang out.

Ning's sword-tip seemed to have stabbed onto something. An incredibly loud collision could be heard as space around the sword-tip began to ripple violently.

"Get over here." Ning's sword spun about, transforming into a black hole that possessed astonishing absorptive power. It was able to forcibly entangle and entrap the invisible object.

The sword-light completely surrounded the invisible object, forcing it to finally reveal its true form. A strange object that was shaped like the horn of an ox had appeared. It was completely black in color, but it was also covered with strands of violet-colored vein lines. It was sharp at one end and blunt at the other.

"Mm?" Ning reached out and grabbed the object.

“Heavy wokejade?” Ning mused to himself. If one was to voyage through the endless primordial chaos, one naturally had to first become familiar with many of the strange objects within it. World God Northrest had transmitted a great deal of this information to Ning, who was able to recognize this object at a glance. “It’s actually heavy wokejade? This is quite a valuable mineral. However, no one in the Three Realms is capable of smelting it.”

Heavy wokejade was incomparably resilient. Even prior to smelting and forging, it was as tough and resilient as a Chaos treasure. This truly was an extremely precious mineral.

“In the future, I’ll enter the primordial chaos and travel to Vastheaven Palace. Perhaps it will be of use to me at some point.” Ning waved his hand, collecting the item and pulling it into his estate-treasure.

Ning then turned his head to look behind him.

The six True Gods were staring at him, rather dazed. Empress Xi’s mouth was open, as though she wanted to say something, but no words could come out.

“Ji Ning.” In the end, it was the straightforward and blunt Kuafu who spoke out. “Your swordforce reached the fifth stage?”

“Yeah.” Ning nodded.

“...Why didn’t you tell us earlier?” Kuafu asked.

“Well, we didn’t run into any danger that you couldn’t easily deal with, Kuafu. There was no real need for me to get involved,” Ning said with a laugh.

The nearby Xingtian said hurriedly, “Ji Ning, are you able to see through the illusions of Earthmoan Mountain?” If he was, they’d be able to leave this place.

“Yes.” Ning nodded.

Luwu, Windfate, and the others all felt relieved. Although they had mentally prepared themselves for death, staying alive was naturally much

preferred.

“Follow me,” Ning said.

“Follow Ji Ning, everyone!” Kuafu said hurriedly, “Do what he says.”

“Right.” The six True Gods all immediately followed behind Ning, who advanced with sword in hand.

“Another one is coming.” Ning once more struck out with his sword. His sword-arts flashed out in an unpredictable, ephemeral manner. It instantly struck against yet another invisible attacking object. Ning’s sword-art once more transformed into a black hole, trapping the second invisible object as well.

“Earthmoan Mountain should be a ‘Wokejade Realm’.” Ning once more reached out with his hand to grab the piece of heavy wokejade. He glanced at it, then tossed it into his estate-treasure. “In all the Three Realms, I’d wager that no one knows as much as me about Earthmoan Mountain.”

The endless primordial chaos was filled with countless dangers, and World God Northrest had recorded details regarding many of them. If you were to foolishly adventure through the primordial chaos without knowing about some of the dangerous types of regions within it, you truly would be courting death. No one would be able to save such a fool.

Wokejade Realms were a type of danger zone which World God Northrest had written about. Based on the information Ning had, he was able to quickly ascertain that Earthmoan Mountain was a type of Wokejade Realm.

“Ji Ning, how long before we can leave?” Empress Xi looked at Ji Ning in a different way now. Fifth-stage swordforce, and sword-arts that surpassed the Heavenly Daos; these two points alone ensured that Ji Ning had to be very close to the overlord level of power! His single-target attacks would be even more terrifying than Kuafu’s!

“Don’t worry,” Ning said. “Earthmoan Mountain is essentially a world unto itself; if you don’t see through its illusions, there’s no way to escape

it at all. When we talk about ‘seeing the truth’, we aren’t talking about literally seeing through all the illusions. Rather, what I can do is just barely get a sense of where those strange objects are going to attack from. Through them, I can get a rough sense of direction.”

“Through those strange objects?” Windfate, Graceful Peacock, Luwu, and the others were all puzzled.

“Right.” Ning nodded.

“Those things that are attacking us are formed deep underneath the ground. They are expelled with astonishing power through Earthmoan Mountain’s eruptions,” Ning said. “The closer we are to the core of Earthmoan Mountain, the more powerful those objects will be. The farther away we are, the weaker they will be.”

“I heard Daoist Three Purities say the same.” Empress Xi nodded. “However, that’ll only allow you to get a very crude sense of direction. In addition, Earthmoan Mountain’s dangers aren’t just limited to those invisible objects.”

“Right...I heard that Earthmoan Mountain can also give birth to terrifyingly powerful attractive forces that can devour even major powers,” Graceful Peacock said hurriedly.

Ning nodded. “That is indeed the case.”

Wokejade Realms were usually in the ‘eruption’ phase, but they occasionally had a ‘devouring’ phase as well! Each time there was a ‘devouring’ phase, the closer you were to the core the more powerful the attractive force would be. Once you were actually swallowed inside...it was virtually guaranteed that you would perish, even if you were an Ancestral Immortal or an Elder God. It would take some truly impressive and extraordinary measures for you to survive. If you were able to safely enter the deep recesses of the realm, you would be able to acquire an enormous amount of heavy wokejade. The heavy wokejade itself was formed through countless eruption cycles and devouring cycles, resulting in the swallowed objects being refined into priceless treasures.

The pieces of heavy wokejade that ‘attacked’ Ning’s group with each

eruption was just a tiny fraction of the enormous hoard of heavy wokejade that existed deep underneath Earthmoan Mountain.

“That’s why we have to move quickly. It is currently in the ‘eruption’ phase. Once the ‘devouring’ phase begins, things will become even more dangerous.” Ning still felt quite confident, and in truth only the core regions of Earthmoan Mountain would pose a threat to him. The ordinary regions were of no threat to him at all; he himself already had the power of an overlord-class figure, after all.

Ning led the way quite quickly. They only walked forward for a brief period of time before suddenly, the world turned bright. The thicket of forests around them vanished, transforming into an awe-inspiring sight of chained mountain ranges. Far off in the distance, mountains were continuously toppling and falling apart. They could vaguely make out three mighty figures that glowed with boundless golden light. The three figures were furiously striking out with Buddha-palms, and each palm contained utterly ruinous power that was being used to annihilate the surrounding mountains.

“That’s Tathagata,” Kuafu said delightedly.

“TATHAGATA!” Xingtian called out to him in a loud voice.

Ning laughed as well. “We made it out.”

“So these are Tathagata’s dharma-bodies?” Ning stared at Tathagata’s three mighty dharma-bodies, paying especial attention to the Sakyamuni body. “He’s merely a True God and third-tier Ancestral Immortal, but his insights into the Dao are so profound that he is still able to unleash the power of an Elder God.”

The distant Lord Buddha noticed the seven tiny figures appear as well.

“Wonderful.” Finally, a smile blossomed on Tathagata’s face. His two other dharma-bodies merged into his true body, and the three Buddhas behind him flew forward towards him as well.

Tathagata’s squad of four Buddhas all flew towards Ning, and Ning’s group of seven rode a cloud towards them as well.

“You ended up escaping on your own.” Tathagata laughed. “I wonder how you did it?”

“It was Darknorth.” Graceful Peacock spoke out from within Ning’s group.

“Darknorth?” Tathagata looked towards Ning with surprise.

Kuafu agreed. “Right. Ji Ning is extremely powerful. I’m afraid that even I wouldn’t necessarily be a match for him. Three Purities was trapped here for more than three thousand years, but Ji Ning managed to lead us out after just a short period of time. Ahahaha! Once that old Daoist hears about this, I wonder what sort of an expression he will have on his face?”

And at this exact moment back in the Three Realms, Graceful Peacock was narrating everything which had just happened to the concerned major powers of the Nuwa Alliance.

Chapter 17: Subhuti and Old Man Yuan

The Three Realms. Allclans Palace.

Graceful Peacock was narrating the entire story to the major powers present. “We were trapped in Earthmoan Mountain, and both Luwu and Windfate were heavily wounded. We were just about finished, but Darknorth...fellow Daoist Darknorth had been carefully scrutinizing everything from inside our formation, and he finally was able to see through the illusions of Earthmoan Mountain and see the truth. He walked out of our formation, then blocked several invisible attacks of Earthmoan Mountain as he led us to safety.”

“He blocked those attacks?” Exalted Celestial Thundergod asked, “Graceful Peacock, didn’t you say that the attacks of Earthmoan Mountain are extremely powerful? Empress Xi was just barely able to defend against those attacks, thanks to the protective formation, but she was still wounded. Ji Ning walked out of the formation, and THEN blocked those attacks?”

“Right.” Graceful Peacock nodded, her eyes sparkling as she smiled. “Fellow Daoist Darknorth is one of the most peerless figures to ever exist, ever since Pangu established Heaven and Earth. He has already reached the fifth stage of swordforce.”

“The fifth stage?” Exalted Celestial Thundergod was incredulous. “How is that possible?”

The entire palace became a hubbub of commotion.

Fifth-stage swordforce?

Anyone and everyone who could reach the fifth stage of swordforce would become one of the most elite Daofathers alive. Someone like Ji Ning, who also knew the [Five Treasures] sword-art, would be even more terrifying.

“Is that true?”

“He hasn’t even trained for a thousand years, right?” The major powers

were all discussing this in hushed voices.

Lord Tathagata the Buddha, seated on high, spoke out. "It is indeed so."

Exalted Celestial Thundergod was now truly dazed. He could no longer say a word.

"Ahahaha!" Daofather Subhuti, also seated on high, started to laugh.

Next to him was Daoist Three Purities, who laughed as well. "Subhuti, you knew all along?"

Subhuti just smugly stroked his beard.

"My junior apprentice-brother truly is formidable." Houyi laughed as well. "We have gained yet another mighty general for the Endwar."

Exalted Celestial Thundergod was filled with many mixed emotions. He was an aloof, arrogant figure, and he originally had not held Ji Ning in any regard. Ji Ning's performance at the Deerchaser world, though...it had caused Thundergod to feel rather upset. Still, he was able to console himself that the kid had relied on the Rahu Formation and the Envoy of All Things. The kid's true power was still quite weak.

But now, the 'kid' had fifth-stage swordforce and sword-arts that surpassed the limits of the Heavenly Daos. This meant that Ji Ning was now, indisputably, the number one Sword Immortal of the Three Realms!

"Subhuti." Finally, Thundergod spoke out. "Congratulations."

Subhuti looked at Thundergod and chortled. "This old Daoist loves to put on airs and keep people guessing. I hope you aren't too angry with me, Thundergod."

"How could I be? Our Nuwa Alliance has gained yet another powerful general. I couldn't be happier!" Thundergod replied honestly.

Subhuti nodded.

Although Thundergod was a stubborn, solitary, and arrogant figure, his loyalty to the Nuwa Alliance was absolutely beyond reproach. In the end... it had been Subhuti's dear old friend, Old Man Yuan, a figure far more powerful than Thundergod, who had ended up vacillating between the

two sides. To this very day, he still had yet to join the Nuwa Alliance.

“My old friend...I truly don't wish to end up in a fight to the death against you,” Subhuti murmured to himself.

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This was a damaged, badly ravaged planet, but there were two major powers present here.

An old man with a red nose was seated in the lotus position in front of a thatched cottage. Before him was a small table, and across from him sat the white-bearded Subhuti. This was one of Subhuti's incarnations.

“Congratulations. Your disciple actually reached the fifth stage of swordforce.” The red-nosed elder sighed with emotion. “A pity, such a pity. I knew all along that Ji Ning's potential was extraordinarily. I really wanted to take him on as my disciple, but you refused to accept.”

“I didn't actually refuse you,” Subhuti said. “I told you; so long as you joined our side, you could immediately take on Ji Ning as your disciple. But you refused to accept.”

“I still cannot accept.” Old Man Yuan shook his head.

“Hmph.”

Subhuti let out a cold laugh. “We've been fighting against the Seamless Gate for so long now. You should be able to tell that our differences are completely irreconcilable. At a time like this...you continue to waver! You said all those pompous things about ‘not wanting to see all your old friends die, one by one’...but your actions now are causing even more of our old friends to die! Your words are complete bullshit!”

“Yes.” Old Man Yuan nodded, a distant look in his eyes. “I admit that I said those things for the sake of saving face. All of those things I said were lies.”

Subhuti just looked at him.

He felt pain in his heart.

They had all emerged together from the primordial chaos as ignorant,

wide-eyed newborns. They had all supported each other, discussed the Dao together, advanced together on the path of cultivation. They were so close to each other that they were like actual brothers. Some of them had ended up dying in the chaotic wars of the Primordial Era, while others had died in the war that had ended that era. Daoist Threelives, for example, had already perished.

Not many were still alive...but this old friend of his, 'Old Man Yuan', had actually refused to stand alongside them at such a critical hour.

"You finally admit to it," Subhuti said icily.

"Yes." Old Man Yuan shook his head. "Ever since the Primordial Era, we have suffered incursions from alien Outsiders. When we killed them, we gained some of their techniques and some of their records regarding the infinite primordial chaos. I came to understand that this place of ours is nothing more than a single chaosworld. The primordial chaos is a far vaster universe. When I learned this, I became filled with the desire to travel far away, to see more things."

"We 'True Gods' who were born from the primordial chaos were nothing more than local bumpkins who were born to this region. How can we be considered 'major powers'? We simply relied on the power we gained at birth." Old Man Yuan shook his head. "In the endless primordial chaos, the true 'major powers' are the World Gods and Chaos Immortals. They are capable of easily wiping out our entire world."

"Nuwa saw the truth long ago. The Three Realms was too small a place to contain her, and so she left to enter the vaster world outside of it."

"I want to journey through that vast world as well." Old Man Yuan's eyes were filled with desire. "But I'm not strong enough yet. Those alien Outsiders, the Lord of All Things...I learned that even someone as formidable as the Lord of All Things was nothing more than a minor figure in the primordial chaos. There are many who are far more powerful than him. As for Rahu, he was an even more irrelevant figure."

"I have to become more powerful."

"A war for the Three Realms? A struggle between the Nuwa Alliance

and the Seamless Gate? I've never cared about such things. Your visions are far too narrow...your gazes are focused on the Three Realms, but my gaze is focused on the endless primordial chaos." Old Man Yuan shook his head. "I've never even considered risking my life in some squabble here in the Three Realms."

"I want to leave this place. I want to become even more powerful."

"Because I was born into the Three Realms, I wasn't able to acquire any good techniques. I had no opportunities. Once I leave, I might be able to become a World God or a Chaos Immortal," Old Man Yuan said eagerly. "That's what I truly want. That's what I truly desire!"

Subhuti continued to stare at him coldly. "Selfish! True, compared to the vast primordial chaos, the Three Realms is a very small place, and we are indeed nothing more than local bumpkins...but this is our home! The Three Realms is our home. All of us were born here, and we were all like brothers. They are now in mortal danger, but you are just going to stand by and watch? For the sake of becoming a so-called World God or Chaos Immortal, you are just going to watch as your old friends go off to fight? Go off to die?"

"I never thought that my old friend Yuan would end up like this." Subhuti shook his head.

"Ahahaha..." Old Man Yuan actually began to laugh, laugh so hard that his beard shook. He then looked towards Subhuti with a dagger-sharp gaze. "Yes, I am selfish. The path of cultivation is a selfish path to begin with. If I'm going to walk this path, of course I need to treasure my own life. Of course I have to seize every opportunity I can find to become more powerful. Am I supposed to foolishly stand alongside the rest of you and risk everything?"

"You don't possess any transcendental qualities. Neither we nor the Seamless Gate will permit you to remain unaligned." Although Subhuti felt sorrow in his heart, he still tried to dissuade Old Man Yuan.

"I'll do everything I can to get as much as I can from the Seamless Gate," Old Man Yuan said calmly. "Don't worry. Before the Endwar

begins, I'll leave the Three Realms and enter the endless primordial chaos. I'll take my old friends with me, and together we shall adventure through it. As for what happens to you and the Seamless Gate? I won't get involved."

"Leave?" Subhuti was surprised.

"Right." Old Man Yuan laughed coldly. "What, did you actually think that I would really fight on behalf of the Seamless Gate? No; neither your side nor the Seamless Gate is worth me risking my life for."

"Good. Very good indeed." Subhuti laughed hard, as though he had heard an incredibly funny joke. "During my [Dream of the Three Realms], I can see countless mortals change...but now, I see that the hearts of Fiendgods can change as well. You've changed. You've changed far, far too much compared to the Yuan who was born alongside me from within the primordial chaos."

"Back then, I was just a newborn. I was born with mastery over a Grand Dao, but aside from that I knew nothing at all. Back then, we were too simple and naïve." Old Man Yuan shook his head. "As far as I'm concerned, my brothers and friends are of secondary importance. My path of cultivation is of paramount importance."

Subhuti gave Old Man Yuan a long, deep look, then disappeared into thin air.

As for Old Man Yuan, he just continued to sit there quietly. He lifted up one of the wine cups and took a small sip from it. "Once I become a World God and look back, all of this will be nothing more than a memory."

Chapter 18: Nineteen Years

Within that castle located deep inside the Primordial Ruinworld.

Godfiend Witherspike's eyes were flashing with dangerous light. The entire hall was completely silent, and none of his six subordinates dared to make a sound. Not even the powerful one-armed man dared to say a thing. Although Godfiend Witherspike rather respected him because they were on the same general level of power, the one-armed man knew just how what a terrifyingly demonic figure the Godfiend actually was.

"I was overconfident!" Godfiend Witherspike growled gutterally to himself. "I didn't expect this Ji Ning would actually be able to solve the riddle of Earthmoan Mountain. That place is a Wokejade Realm! Not even Ancestral Immortals or Elder Gods should be able to escape it so quickly. How did a bumpkin like him solve it? He's trained for less than a thousand years!"

"If I knew this would happen, I would've gone to Earthmoan Mountain in person and waited for them there."

Godfiend Witherspike was feeling rather frustrated right now. He had very nearly wiped out the entire squad of Fiendgods! If he had personally gone to Earthmoan Mountain and set up an ambush there, he probably would've been able to wipe out Kuafu's entire squad. However, his arrogance and pride was bred deep. Those figures were mere True Gods and third-tier Ancestral Immortals, while he was an exalted Elder God! He had also roamed the primordial chaos for many years and experienced many things. He held no respect for these locals whatsoever. Personally set up an ambush for them? He felt it was beneath him!

In all the Three Realms, there were only two things he was leery of. The first was whatever Mother Nuwa left behind to her successors before departing. The second was the Lord of All Fiends.

Mother Nuwa was a World God, after all. The ancestral homeland of a World God was never an easy place to invade, even if that World God had departed.

As for the Lord of All Fiends, he was an even more freakish figure who had actually been able to escape from a World God!

Aside from these two concerns, Godfiend Witherspike really wasn't worried about anything or anyone else. He had felt that Kuafu's squad would definitely die. He had not imagined that Ji Ning was this formidable.

Still, he couldn't be blamed for this oversight. Logically speaking, there was no way someone like Ji Ning should've been able to escape Earthmoan Mountain in such a short period of time. Alas, Ji Ning had the legacy of World God Northrest. The techniques he had were all far superior to the ones which Godfiend Witherspike knew!

"Very well, then. Your squads wish to ruin my territory, but it won't be that easy..."

"This was just the first trap. You were lucky enough to escape...but next time, I won't be so careless."

Godfiend Witherspike gently tightened the grip of his slender fingers around his right armrest. Crack! The armrest instantly disintegrated, but moments later its fragments automatically reformed.

Everyone was completely silent. Not even Celestial Immortal Blackheaven dared to say a thing. When Blackheaven had served the Lord of All Things, he had met Godfiend Witherspike quite a few times. Witherspike was definitely a figure who was just as terrifying as the Lord of All Things had been.

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The Thousand Mountains world.

Ji Ning's group was travelling alongside Lord Tathagata's group.

"Darknorth." Lord Tathagata the Buddha smiled as he looked at Ning. "Which of the four squads do you plan to accompany? You are a human. Technically, you should follow the squad which the human race sent."

"But he joined us a long time ago!" Kuafu immediately protested.

“We’ve been working together for quite some time now. We’re used to each other,” Xingtian rebutted as well.

Empress Xi, Luwu, and the others all immediately voiced their opposition as well.

Was this a joke? Given how powerful Ji Ning was, how could they possibly be willing to let him be taken away by another squad?

“I’ve always been on good terms with Kuafu, Xingtian, and the others. There’s no need to go to the trouble of switching,” Ning laughed.

“Exactly so!” Kuafu reached out with his big hand, loping it around Ning’s shoulders.

“Fine.” Lord Buddha nodded. “You might as well. Still, don’t get overconfident. The trap you fell into was just one of many dangers we will encounter in our campaign against the Primordial Ruinworld. Even more and even greater dangers await us. You have to be careful. I can dimly sense that things in the Primordial Ruinworld aren’t as simple as we thought them to be.”

“We understand,” Kuafu said hurriedly.

Lord Buddha glanced carefully at their surroundings, then said, “I imagine that Fuxi and Jade Cauldron will arrive here soon as well. This really was a close call. If it wasn’t for Ji Ning, your entire squad probably would’ve been wiped out.”

A short time later, all four squads had gathered together.

This close call had woken them all up to the reality of the situation. During their previous efforts, they had encountered some dangerous situations as well, but none of them were truly deadly! This situation, however, had descended out of nowhere and had been absolutely terrifying.

After gathering together, the four squads started to travel in closer proximity to each other. They advanced more slowly and more cautiously.

Time continued to flow on. In the blink of an eye, nineteen years went

by.

Ning and the others had already covered nearly 90% of the territory of the Primordial Ruinworld, and they had caused utter devastation to it.

During the past nineteen years, Tathagata, Fuxi, Jade Cauldron, Ning, and the others had all been extremely cautious. Ning's display of his sword-arts had thoroughly convinced Kuafu's squad of his prowess. He had faster evasion techniques! More powerful group attacks! More powerful close combat techniques! A better sense for danger than Daofather Windfate!

They had encountered numerous dangerous situations during the past nineteen years, and Ning's dazzling displays of power had firmly cemented his status.

Because they were incredibly cautious, not a single member of the four squads had died during the past nineteen years.

"Darknorth, catch." Kuafu flung a wine gourd over.

Ning was seated atop a distant boulder. He reached out to catch the gourd, then raised his head and took a gulp.

"We've been advancing fairly quickly. Jade Cauldron and the others have been a bit slower than us. Let's take a rest and wait a while," Graceful Peacock said.

"Haha, we've already wrecked more than ninety percent of the Primordial Ruinworld." Luwu couldn't help but laugh. "Although the final places are rather dangerous, as long as we are careful we should be able to finish this campaign in another ten or so years."

The golden-robed Empress Xi stood with regal dignity. She said solemnly, "Both Fuxi and Tathagata have discussed this matter. On the way over, we've encountered multiple dangers. Although none of them were as terrifying as Earthmoan Mountain, they were still able to see a few hints of the truth. The Primordial Ruinworld's true power is nothing like that we expected."

"Darknorth, what do you think?" Xingtian looked towards Ning.

Seated on the boulder, Ning just smiled. “No matter what, we have to keep attacking and advancing. Let’s just be more careful.”

Nineteen years...

During these nineteen years, his Primaltwin had remained within the Crescent world, training inside the Heavengazer Tower of Radiance. The Heavengazer Tower had been set to internally advance time at a hundred times normal speed, which meant that he had actually been training for the equivalent of two thousand years. His sword-arts had become even more marvelous, and he was slowly becoming even more powerful.

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Within the castle deep inside the Primordial Ruinworld.

“They’ve had it too easy the past few years. None of the bumpkins ended up dying.” Godfiend Witherspike sat atop his throne, staring down coldly. “Very well, then. They’ve already entered the Goldriver world. This time, I shall slay Fuxi and Tathagata in that world!”

The six golden-armored figures beneath him were all startled.

Celestial Immortal Blackheaven said hurriedly, “Mighty Godfiend Witherspike, although the Goldriver world is a world which we spent tremendous amounts of effort over, the Human Emperor and the Lord Buddha are extraordinarily powerful figures. To slay even one of them will be very hard. To kill two? I think it might be better to focus on them one at a time.”

“I let Kuafu’s squad escape last time.” Godfiend Witherspike swept his cold gaze towards Celestial Immortal Blackheaven, causing Blackheaven’s heart to shudder. “I no longer have much faith in your so-called ‘formations’.”

“It will indeed be necessary to use them to kill Fuxi and Tathagata, but in the end...it will be up to me to personally deal with them.” A bloody light flickered deep within Godfiend Witherspike’s eyes.

“Personally?” Blackheaven was startled.

He had thought that the Godfiend would wait until the Endwar before fighting.

“Right. Personally.” Godfiend Witherspike swept his subordinates with his gaze. “Saber, when the time comes, I might need you to get involved as well.”

“Yes, Master.” The single-armed man bowed with respect.

Blackheaven felt his heart shudder. Good heavens. Both Godfiend Witherspike and Saber were going to strike? Given the formations they had set up around the Goldriver world...it really was possible that they might be able to slay Fuxi and Tathagata, a pair of overlord-class figures.

“You can inform the Seamless Gate.” Godfiend Witherspike glanced at Blackheaven. “However...ideally, the less they know the better. Don’t give the Nuwa Alliance any chance of finding out about this. This attack of mine should be able to catch them completely offguard, because they don’t even know that I exist. But if this attack ends in failure, it’ll be quite difficult to find another such chance.”

“How could you possibly fail, mighty Godfiend?” Celestial Immortal Blackheaven said hurriedly.

“They will be caught completely offguard, and they are also weaker than us. We’ve also made meticulous preparations around the Goldriver world.” The red-bearded elder hurriedly agreed. “We will definitely win.”

“If we are to make a move, we must ensure it kills them.” Godfiend Witherspike said calmly, “Head out.”

Whoosh.

The castle instantly flew into the air and began to move towards the Goldriver world at high speed.

The figures within the castle remained quite calm. Godfiend Witherspike and his six golden-armored generals had experienced many, many dangers in the past. Celestial Immortal Blackheaven, however, was quite excited. “If we are able to kill Fuxi and Tathagata...”

Chapter 19: Critical Danger

The leaders of the Seamless Gate were all excited upon hearing that Godfiend Witherspike was making his move. They were waiting eagerly for Witherspike to slay Fuxi and Tathagata.

The Goldriver world.

Ji Ning and the rest of the seven were resting at a beautifully scenic place. Their squad included the incredibly fast Kuafu and the shockingly fierce Ji Ning. They ended up being the squad that fought forward at the fastest pace.

“We have to wait a full day. I’m going to take a nap here.” Luwu chortled as he lay down onto the grassy ground.

“You lazy fellow.” The nearby Xingtian shook his head.

“With Kuafu and Darknorth in our squad, what have I to worry about?” Luwu felt quite relaxed.

Xingtian glanced at Kuafu, who was drinking some wine as well, as well as the distant Ji Ning. Ji Ning was seated in the lotus position atop his boulder, holding a gourd of wine in one hand while experimenting with a few sword-stances with his other. Ning’s fingers moved like a blur, but if one paid careful attention to them, one would sense a sword-intent that was absolutely terrifying. Even Xingtian couldn’t help but feel his heart shudder.

“I’ve been praised as being a ‘god of war’, but Ji Ning has the number one sword-arts of the Three Realms, and he improves so incredibly fast.” Xingtian was secretly amazed. “I really can’t compare to him.”

But of course, he had no idea that Ning’s Primaltwin was located in the Heavengazer Tower. A day in the outside world meant a hundred days had passed inside the tower. How could Ning’s sword-arts NOT improve quickly?

Actually, Ning spent more than seventy percent of his time in the Heavengazer Tower meditating on the Dao!

However, completely focusing on just one thing wouldn't necessarily be ideal. Thus, Ning would occasionally train in his sword-arts as well as various divine abilities. He tried to balance his training regime, but even so his improvement in the sword remained quite astonishing.

"That nameless sword-art really is unfathomably profound." Ning sighed mentally to himself.

World God Northrest stood at the very peak of power, even amongst World Gods. This was primarily thanks to the nameless sword-art! He had actually only acquired Violetjewel later on.

The nameless sword-art was truly unfathomable. After mastering it, World God Northrest had developed ninety-eight sword-arts which he had placed on those ninety-eight stone steles! Ning could now train in these techniques without any problems at all, but every time he tried to train in the nameless sword-art, he found it to be incredibly taxing and difficult to understand.

From this, Ning could tell that the sword-spirit of Violetjewel was correct; he had to master all ninety-eight sword-arts before he could truly begin to train in the nameless sword-art!

However, Ning still did gain a few minor insights over the course of nearly two thousand years in the tower as he occasionally meditated on the nameless sword-art. Those minor insights were enough to allow Ning's sword-arts to grow dramatically more powerful.

"Violetjewel is nothing more than a weapon," Ning mused to himself. "Compared to Violetjewel, the most important gifts left to me by World God Northrest were those ninety-eight stone sword-steles and the nameless sword-art within the jade shrine."

He continued to take a few gulps of wine while practicing his sword-stances.

The surrounding area was quite beautiful. The area around them was filled with lovely grass, but farther away there was only violently shaking regions of shattered space.

The Primordial Ruinworld had many regions of distorted spacetime and shattered space, or strange seas of blood. These things were extremely rare in the Three Realms, but extremely common here in the Ruinworld. Not even the creatures who lived here dared to move too close to those regions. If they were drawn into them, they would quickly die unless they were strong enough.

“Not good.” Graceful Peacock suddenly called out.

Swish! Swish! Swish! All of them turned to look. True God Luwu, who had appeared asleep, instantly rose to his feet as well.

“What’s wrong?” Kuafu immediately asked.

Graceful Peacock said hurriedly, “This Goldriver world is fairly dangerous. The squad led by Lord Buddha has been trapped into a danger zone.”

“Oh?” Kuafu let out a sigh of relief, then laughed. “Given how powerful Lord Buddha is, I trust he’ll be able to handle it himself.”

Daofather Windfate smiled as well, twirling his fan. “Lord Buddha is incredibly powerful. He’s generally able to easily deal with any dangerous situations he might encounter. If even he cannot resolve the situation, the rest of us would be of no use either.”

“Lord Buddha said that he can deal with it, but he’ll need some time.” Graceful Peacock nodded. “Lord Buddha’s been trapped in a complicated formation. There’s no way to destroy it through raw power; the only option is to slowly solve the formation and deconstruct it. Fuxi’s squad is moving towards him at high speed to assist him.”

“Fuxi’s heading there as well?” Empress Xi nodded.

Everyone felt relaxed.

Tathagata was the leader of the Buddhist Sangha and incredibly skilled in defense. Even if three or four other overlord-class figures were to simultaneously assault him, he would be able to hold on for a period of time.

As for Fuxi, he was the number one formations expert of the Three Realms. He was the ideal candidate for helping Tathagata solve the formation.

“Let’s head over there as well and take a look at what the formation is all about,” Ning said with a laugh.

“Yes, let’s go take a look.”

“Although we won’t be of much help, we can still take a good look. It’s boring and pointless just to sit here and wait.”

Ning and the rest of the seven True Gods were quite relaxed. They immediately soared onto a cloud and flew towards Tathagata.

No one felt much concern over the fact that Tathagata’s squad was trapped!

Not even the major powers located inside the Allclans Palace of the Nuwa Alliance were concerned. Lord Tathagata himself wasn’t too worried either. In the past twenty years, they had encountered numerous dangerous situations in the Primordial Ruinworld. On multiple different occasions, they had been trapped within a dangerous region for a brief period of time. In each case, they were able to resolve the situation quite quickly.

After being trapped, Tathagata had put it this way: “The formation is just a bit complicated. Once Fuxi arrives, he’ll soon be able to defeat it.”

They had experienced so many situations like this that they no longer considered it a big deal.

Graceful Peacock laughed. “Fuxi’s already arrived.”

“How long does the Human Sovereign need in order to break the formation?” Kuafu asked.

“Fuxi is still inspecting the formation. Umm...the formation’s a bit complex, but Fuxi said that he should be able to break it in under an hour.” Graceful Peacock smiled.

“An hour? We might as well slow down a bit. By the time we get there,

the Human Sovereign and Lord Buddha will probably have just escaped the formation.” Daofather Windfate laughed. “There’s no point in getting there early and just waiting.”

“Let’s keep flying at our normal speed,” Ning said.

Graceful Peacock’s face suddenly changed. This immediately captured the attention of Ji Ning, Windfate, Kuafu, Empress Xi, Luwu, and Xingtian.

“What’s wrong?” Ning immediately asked quietly.

“There’s a bit of a problem.” Graceful Peacock frowned. “Something’s wrong.”

Two of her clones were accompanying Lord Buddha’s squad and Fuxi’s squad, and so she knew exactly what was happening in each squad.

“Not good!” Graceful Peacock called out in shock. “The formation’s completely changed! Another formation has also appeared outside of the first formation, and it’s completely trapped Fuxi’s squad inside of it. Three golden-armored major powers just appeared! We’ve never encountered these three before.”

“Three major powers we’ve never encountered before? Are they the Four Thearchs?” Xingtian asked frantically.

“No, they aren’t the Four Thearchs.” Graceful Peacock’s face turned even uglier. “Tathagata’s squad is under attack as well, and other alien Outsiders have also appeared. A large group of alien Daofathers have appeared...dozens of them! All of the Daofathers of the Primordial Ruinworld have appeared and are assaulting them! Fuxi’s been locked down by those three golden-armored Outsiders. Those three are incredibly powerful; they’ve completely tied him down.”

“Let’s move!” Kuafu immediately bellowed.

“The rest of you should enter my estate-treasure. Let me lead the way,” Ning barked right away.

“Alright.” None of them hesitated at all. Ning waved his hand, collecting all six of the True Gods into his estate-treasure. Ning then

transformed into a black lightning serpent, moving at maximum speed towards the place where Tathagata had been trapped.

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Daoist Jade Cauldron's squad, which had similarly been relaxing, was notified as well.

"What? Almost all of the alien True Gods and Daofathers of the Primordial Ruinworld have appeared? They are surrounding and attacking Tathagata? The Human Sovereign's actually been tied down and won't be able to reinforce him?" Daoist Jade Cauldron immediately understood how ugly the situation had turned.

"Right." Graceful Peacock's faced was covered with worry.

"Let's go!" Daoist Jade Cauldron immediately bellowed.

The seven major powers of the Daoist Path immediately boarded a boat-type Chaos treasure and moved at high speed towards the place where Tathagata was trapped.

.....

Although both Ning's squad and Jade Cauldron's squad were worried, the most worried figures of all were within the Allclans Palace in the Three Realms.

Upon hearing this news, the major powers there immediately knew that things were dire.

"All of the True Gods and Daofathers of the Primordial Ruinworld have appeared...and three golden-armored figures that we've never seen before have appeared and are capable of tying down Fuxi." Daoist Three Purities hurriedly shouted, "The Primordial Ruinworld really was hiding its true power, but its true power is far more terrifying than what we expected! Houyi, Suiren, immediately lead squads of True Gods and Daofathers to go rescue Fuxi and Tathagata!"

"Alright." Houyi and Suiren both nodded.

Suiren was believed by many to be the most powerful figure in the

Nuwa Alliance, while Houyi's true power unknown and unfathomable. The two immediately took command over a group of thirty-six True Gods and Daofathers, then departed from the Allclans Palace at high speed.

“Graceful Peacock, after Houyi and Suijen reach the Primordial Ruinworld, it'll take them some time to fly over to Tathagata's location. Have Jade Cauldron, Kuafu, and Darknorth do their best to try and help Fuxi defeat those three golden-armored figures,” Daoist Three Purities hurriedly instructed.

“Yes,” Graceful Peacock immediately acknowledged.

Chapter 20: Reinforcements

The Allclans Palace. Everyone was in a state of panic.

“These three golden-armored Outsiders that we’ve never seen before have actually managed to stop Fuxi in his tracks.” Daofather Subhuti frowned. “Where did such powerful enemies come from?”

Fuxi was a Human Sovereign, and he had True Gods and Daofathers in his squad. And yet, they had all been completely stymied by these three alien Outsiders.

“Such powerful individuals shouldn’t be completely unknown figures.” Tathagata laughed calmly. “No need to panic. Although I’m being attacked by many, my true body is present; although these alien Outsiders are formidable, they won’t be able to do anything to me.”

“Right.” Daoist Three Purities nodded. “I feel slightly better that you are the one trapped there.”

“Hm?” Tathagata’s face suddenly changed.

“What’s wrong?” All the major powers in the hall looked towards Tathagata.

“My Great Sun Buddha body has been injured.” Tathagata said in a low voice, and his customary smile was no longer on his face. Instead, he looked as calm and tranquil as the deep seas. “I sensed long ago that things in the Primordial Ruinworld wouldn’t be as simple as we thought them to be, but...the one-armed golden-armored figure who injured me just now is definitely no weaker than I am.”

“No weaker than you?” All the major powers in the hall were stunned.

Tathagata had reached the overlord level of power back in the Primordial Era, and his defensive prowess was number one in all the Three Realms.

“Yes. He’s extremely powerful,” Tathagata said softly. “He’s definitely an overlord. My only option is to focus entirely on defense for now.”

“Hold on as long as you can,” Daoist Three Purities said hurriedly.
“Houyi and Suiren are on the way. Once they get there, this crisis will be resolved.”

“Buddha Leafswirl’s true body has just been destroyed.” Tathagata’s face suddenly changed yet again.

“Buddha Leafswirl’s true body has been destroyed?”

Everyone cried out in shock as they turned to look at a woman located in the corner.

Buddha Leafswirl was an incredible figure of the Buddhist Sangha. She was born a True God, and when Tathagata became an overlord-class figure and established the Buddhist Sangha during the Primordial Era, she had joined him! When she had seen how much suffering there was amongst the common people of the Primordial World of Pangu, she had decided to truly become a mortal herself and join them. She would start as a mortal and train to become a Buddha from scratch so that she might truly experience and understood the sufferings of mortals. That way, she would also be able to better understand the profound mysteries of Buddhism.

She had shattered her own soul and sent her truesoul to be reincarnated. She had experienced countless tribulations, but her truesoul was that of a True God, after all; she had incredibly high talent, and she actually ended up establishing her own Buddhist school, the ‘Leafswirl Sect’. She now had the power of an elite Daofather, and she had both a true body and a Primaltwin. It was her true body that had ventured into the Primordial Ruinworld for this campaign.

“Our foe is very powerful. With a single claw-strike, he was able to break through our protective formation and slay me,” Buddha Leafswirl said.

The atmosphere in the palace instantly grew heavy.

Lord Tathagata said slowly, “Two terrifyingly powerful Outsiders have appeared. Both are overlord-class experts. I’ve already stowed Maitreya and the others into my [Buddha-Realm Within the Palm], and I’m now

fighting off all of these fiends by myself. Given how strong my golden body is, they won't be able to do anything to me within a short period of time.

Lord Tathagata's golden body was so formidable that it could be said to be number one in all the Three Realms.

"Be careful," Daoist Three Purities urged nonetheless. The two of them were the leaders of Buddhism and Daoism. Upon seeing Tathagata fall into such dire straits, Daoist Three Purities couldn't help but feel frantic as well.

However, he had already sent out Suiren and Houyi. The remaining forces they could use to protect the Three Realms were now clearly weaker than before. No matter what, they had to conserve enough power so that they could deal with the Seamless Gate. If all of them left the Three Realms, the Seamless Gate would probably seize the opportunity to completely destroy the Nuwa Alliance's foundation and truly take over the Three Realms.

When that happened, the war for karmic luck would definitely be completely lost.

"We've done what we can. I hope Houyi and Suiren will be able to make it in time." Daoist Three Lives let out a soft sigh.

"As long as they can make it, there won't be any problems at all," Shennong agreed quietly.

"Two overlord-class experts. The Primordial Ruinworld actually has a pair of overlord-class experts..." Daofather Subhuti shook his head. "And extremely powerful ones at that."

.....

The Primordial Ruinworld.

The Sakyamuni body of Lord Buddha was seated in the lotus position, golden light radiating from his body. He had actually manifested a total of eighteen arms, and those eighteen dazzling golden arms were striking out in every single direction.

For now, the many alien Outsiders assaulting him were unable to do anything to him.

“This weak little aboriginal has actually managed to train a protective divine ability to such a level.” The distant Godfiend Witherspike was watching from afar, his tail slowly swaying in the air.

“His protective divine ability is extremely formidable, and his divine body is definitely comparable to a top-grade Protocosmic spirit treasure.” The one-armed man next to him spoke out in agreement. “And his palm-arts are also quite formidable. They fill the skies and leave no openings whatsoever! I’m able to occasionally land a saber-blow on him, but it’s still very hard to injure him. If he completely focuses on defense...all we can do is exhaust his store of divine power. Once he is out of divine power, he’ll die.”

“I really hate those with strong protective divine abilities like this.” Godfiend Witherspike frowned.

“Are the T’ya brothers able to hold on?” Godfiend Witherspike suddenly asked.

“They are skilled in defense, and the three of them fight as if they were one. When they join together in their formation, they are easily capable of holding down Fuxi’s group. Fuxi’s skill mainly lies in formations; he’s a bit weaker in actual combat,” the one-armed man said calmly.

“Master, Daoist Jade Cauldron is about to arrive.” The red-nose elder flew over and bowed respectfully as he spoke.

“Oh?” Godfiend Witherspike nodded. “I almost forgot about Jade Cauldron’s squad and Darknorth’s squad. Let the Four Thearchs take control over twelve True Gods and bar their path! Stop Jade Cauldron and Darknorth’s squads.”

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Soon, a number of True Gods and Daofathers who had been assaulting Tathagata retreated, the Four Thearchs amongst them. They headed off to stop Daoist Jade Cauldron and Ji Ning.

“The Nuwa Alliance sent out two overlord-class experts. One is Tathagata, and his defensive skills are formidable. The other is Fuxi, who is even more formidable in the art of formations. Both are extremely skilled in dealing with large groups of attackers.” Godfiend Witherspike gritted his teeth. If it had been Daoist Three Purities or Sui ren, things would actually have been much easier. Experts skilled in defense caused quite the headache.

“Saber, come up with a method to defeat his palm-arts.” Godfiend Witherspike looked at the one-armed man. “Let’s join forces to suppress him, then deal with him.”

“Alright.” The one-armed man nodded.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Godfiend Witherspike and the one-armed man instantly charged towards Lord Buddha. Lord Buddha continued to sit there calmly, his eighteen golden arms blocking attacks from every direction. He completely focused on defense. His goal was not to win; it was only to avoid making any mistakes.

As for Ji Ning, he was advancing at high speed through the [Ninehorn Lightning Serpent] technique. However, his squad had been the farthest up ahead; the entire reason why they had been planning to wait for a day was to give the other three squads enough time to catch up.

Thus, Daoist Jade Cauldron and his Chaos boat was the first to arrive at Tathagata’s location.

“Jade Cauldron’s squad has already arrived.” Graceful Peacock spoke out to Ning from within his estate-treasure.

“Not good. The Four Thearchs have all appeared, as well as twelve other alien True Gods. They are able to easily block Jade Cauldron’s path. In fact, they are actually suppressing him.”

Ning frowned upon hearing this, but there was nothing he could do aside from continuing to advance at high speed while using the [Ninehorn Lightning Serpent].

The Four Thearchs were all elite Daofathers. They also had twelve other alien True Gods supporting them, while Daoist Jade Cauldron's team consisted of just seven individuals! The Four Thearchs would indeed have the power needed to suppress Daoist Jade Cauldron's squad.

"Darknorth, the Four Thearchs have a total of sixteen in their squad! Jade Cauldron only has seven, while we only have seven as well. The Four Thearchs have more than enough power to completely tie our two squads down," Xingtian sent mentally. "I think we should move to avoid the Four Thearchs and instead go assist Fuxi."

"No. Jade Cauldron's been surrounded as well; if too much time passes, his squad will also be in danger of losing their lives."

Kuafu and the others had become rather frantic as well. The Primordial Ruinworld's forces now held the absolute upper hand. Tathagata was in danger, Fuxi had been tied down, and Jade Cauldron had been surrounded!

"They hid their true power quite well. They forebore from striking for a long time, but as soon as they did they immediately knocked us off-balance." Ning mused to himself, "Fortunately, Three Purities and the others were worried about something like this happening, which is why they sent Fuxi and Tathagata. Those two are very skilled in defense."

Tathagata relied on his powerful body to defend.

Fuxi relied on his formations to defend.

Both were very skilled in delaying and buying time for themselves.

"According to what Graceful Peacock is telling us, two new overlord-class figures have appeared in the Primordial Ruinworld?" Ning's eyes flashed with sharp light. "Weren't the most powerful figures here supposed to be those Four Thearchs? Where did these two overlords come from? Such powerful figures can't possibly be nameless and unknown... but no one has any idea as to who they are. They must have come from the primordial chaos, then."

Alien Outsiders from the primordial chaos...

Multiple such figures had invaded during the Primordial Era, but the

Three Realms era had been much more peaceful. Although there had been a few invasions, those figures had all possessed low levels of strength. They weren't as terrifying as Rahu or the Lord of All Things had been. So in truth, powerful alien Outsiders had arrived long ago! They had simply chosen to hide within the Primordial Ruinworld instead.

“It seems this divine sword of mine is going to see blood soon.”

Swoosh!

The black lightning serpent streaked through the skies, moving towards the direction of a major battle. It was a battle between Daoist Jade Cauldron's group and the alien Outsiders commanded by the Four Thearchs.

“It is Darknorth. Darknorth has arrived. The six of you, follow me. We'll stop Darknorth!” Instantly, two of the Thearchs and six True Gods turned to charge towards Ning.

Chapter 21: Overlord

Thearch Fusha had handsome features, a large frame, and a natural aura of dominance. Thearch Vileye, by contrast, was incomparably ugly. His body was covered with a layer of thick jade skin, and his body was filled with countless bulges and bumps. On his forehead, there was a particularly large bump that had an eye inside of it, and that eye was filled with endless malevolence. Weaker Empyrean Gods and True Immortals would probably be instantly dominated by a single glance of that eye.

“Come with me, but be wary of Darknorth and Kuafu. Be wary of Darknorth in particular; his sword-arts are extremely powerful,” Thearch Fusha instructed.

“Yes.” The six figures immediately followed directly behind them.

Ji Ning was flying through the air, surrounded by his black lightning serpent. He swept the battlefield with his gaze. In his heart, he was most worried about Lord Tathagata the Buddha. Based on what Graceful Peacock had told him, Tathagata was currentingly being assaulted by two overlord-class figures! Even worse, these were figures that no one had ever encountered before.

Two overlord-class figures...it was entirely possible that the two of them were both Elder Gods! If they truly did come from the vast primordial chaos, there was no way for Ji Ning to predict how powerful they might be. If things went on for too long, Lord Buddha might very well be slain!

The Seamless Gate’s alliance with the Primordial Ruinworld meant that they had gained two more overlord-class figures on their side. Ning’s side, the Nuwa Alliance, could not afford any more losses!

“F*ck off.” Ning pointed from afar.

Instantly, rainbow-colored sword-light began to descend upon the world around him in an utterly dazzling fashion. Next, the countless rays of sword-light began to spin together, condensing into a total of nine rainbow swords. They struck down towards Thearch Fusha and six of the

True Gods like nine rainbow lighting bolts! This scene stunned all of the major powers present.

[Sword-Heaven-Earth], third of seven stances: Heavenly Swords Descend!

BOOM! Layers of black light appeared around Thearch Fusha and the rest of the eight. The layers of black light whittled away at the power of the rainbow-colored swords, in the end forcibly halting Ning's strike.

"Darknorth, these aliens of the Primordial Ruinworld have learned some powerful combination formations. Be careful!" The distant Daoist Jade Cauldron sent a hurried mental message.

"Everyone, be careful. All we need to do is keep Darknorth tied down." Thearch Fusha and the rest of the eight were all badly frightened as well. They hadn't even engaged Ji Ning in close combat yet. They never would've imagined that those nine long-distance strikes would contain such incredible power! Fortunately, they had been taught certain things by the Godfiend, and so were able to jointly resist those attacks.

"Sword Immortal Darknorth is too arrogant. He actually dares to fight against us by himself. If he had worked together with Kuafu just now, we might've been in a bit of trouble." Thearch Vileye snickered coldly. "Now that we have this formation which Master taught us...hmph. Sword Immortal Darknorth won't be able to do anything to us."

Whoosh.

Ning came to a halt in midair, frowning as he glanced at the alien Outsiders in front of him.

Time was very precious right now!

They were in a hurry to go reinforce Fuxi and rescue Tathagata! But now, Daoist Jade Cauldron had been trapped here. Thanks to the [Ninehorn Lightning Serpent], Ning would indeed be able to move at high speed and circle around this region, but that would mean Daoist Jade Cauldron's squad would be in serious trouble. If more time passed, they might very well die here. Thus...Ning decided that he might as well spend

a bit more effort here.

“Die!” Ning transformed into a streak of light and charged forward.

“He still isn’t having Kuafu and the others come out?” Thearch Vileye and Thearch Fusha were both startled. “Ji Ning is underestimating us a bit too much. The only reason he is formidable is because of his swordforce. It’s not as though he is an Elder God.”

Whoosh! Whoosh! Ning’s two arms dramatically increased in size, expanding to become more than three thousand meters long as the tips of his fingers shone with rainbow-colored sword-light.

“Fall down!” The vile-looking vertical pupil in Thearch Vileye’s forehead was staring fixedly at Ning, and an invisible wave of force struck out towards him.

Ning, however, just stared back coldly at these alien Outsiders. He was completely unaffected. His soul had been nurtured by the power of his half-step Elder God body. His soul was so powerful that it would probably rank within the top three of the entire Three Realms! His heartforce was at the fourth stage as well! In fact, Ning had also learned a heartforce soul-locking technique from World God Northrest. How could an innate domination technique like this possibly shake his soul? Even if it was a hundred times more powerful, it wouldn’t be able to do anything to Ning.

Those two elongated arms were like a pair of extremely long spears!

Bang! Bang!

Ning’s palms pierced straight through the layers of black light surrounding the two Thearchs and the other six! The Thearchs had felt as though Ning’s palms were quite far away, but in the next instant the two palms had already pierced through the protective black light. The attack was simply too fast; it had completely surpassed the speed of light.

Ning had distilled the best aspects of many different sword-arts to create the most penetrative stance of the [Brightmoon] sword-art: Blood Drop Stance!

Given Ning’s power as a half-step Elder God and his terrifying sword-

arts, the power of this blow was so great that it arguably had reached the apex of power in the Three Realms! Although Ning's palms had merely been trained to the Fifth Cycle of the [Starseizing Hand], it was still more than enough when dealing with these alien Outsiders of the Primordial Ruinworld!

"How can this be?!"

"No!"

The two Thearchs and the six True Gods were completely scared silly. Their first reaction...was to flee!

This was an instinctive desire, separate from all conscious thought!

Whoosh!

The two massive palms that had pierced through their formation were like a pair of metal hammers smashing together! They were like a pair of enormous stormclouds that were joining together in a tremendous clap, capturing the terrified Thearchs and the True Gods between them. Agonized, terrified cries rang out as the ten tried to flee...but alas, how could they possibly move as fast as Ning's palms?

BOOM!!!!

The two massive palms clapped together violently in midair.

The True Gods and Daofathers were completely destroyed, their bodies transformed into dust and their truesouls destroyed.

"B-b-but..." The distant Daoist Jade Cauldron and his squad were dazed by what they had just seen.

They had battled against these alien Outsiders for quite some time now, and they knew exactly how tough and durable that formation was. They had yet to find a way to penetrate the formation, but Ji Ning had managed to shatter it through just his hands? In fact, he had clapped to death those eight True Gods in an instant! Thearch Fusha and Thearch Vileye, two incredibly tough foes, were amongst their ranks as well!

"Flee!"

“Flee right away!”

“He’s an overlord!”

“He’s an Elder God!”

“Quick, flee!”

The other alien True Gods and Daofathers who had been battling Daoist Jade Cauldron were completely scared senseless. Thearch Darkstill and the other Thearch no longer had their usual composure; their only thing on their face was utter terror.

“Flee?” Ning, who had just wiped out those eight True Gods, turned his head to look towards them. Swoosh! He transformed into a black lightning serpent and charged towards them.

“Flee in different directions.”

“Split up!”

They didn’t hesitate at all. They didn’t even dare to think of using their formation to defend against Ji Ning’s attacks. They immediately split apart, fleeing in different directions. Their formation naturally dissipated as well.

Swoosh!

Ning came to a halt. He stood there in midair, staring at the eight True Gods that were fleeing in every which way.

“Arise.” Ning pointed his finger towards the heavens.

The skies turned dark, and streams of rainbow-colored sword-light began to appear in the area around them. The entire region became a world of rainbow sword-light. This caused the fleeing Thearchs and True Gods to reveal looks of horror on their faces, especially Thearch Darkstill. He had sent his nine bugbeasts against Ning, and they had all been wiped out by this technique.

The dazzling rainbow sword-light unfolded like the blooming of a flower, shooting out in every direction.

It was beautiful and dazzling.

Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash!

Sword Peacock, a stance meant for slaughter. Six of the eight alien Daofathers were instantly slain. The two Thearchs managed to resist for a brief moment, but in the end even they found it difficult to resist the consecutive strikes of rainbow sword-light from Sword Peacock. One was disintegrated, while the other, Thearch Darkstill, was able to survive thanks to his defensive skills. However, he was still heavily injured.

Slash! The black lightning serpent flashed past him, and as it did his head went flying, eyes still filled with a look of celebration at having 'survived' Sword Peacock.

The entire world turned silent.

The sixteen alien True Gods had all been slain! The distant Daoist Jade Cauldron, Chijingzi, Holy Mother Turtlesoul, and others all stared blankly. Sixteen True Gods and Daofathers...they had all been wiped out in such a short period of time, and in such a completely overwhelming fashion. This sort of power...there was only one explanation.

"He's an overlord?" Old man Chijingzi murmured to himself.

The six Daofathers by his side all shivered.

Overlord?

They stared at the distant white-robed youth, the ordinary-looking kid. He was an overlord?

"Sword Immortal Darknorth? He's reached the overlord level?" Daoist Jade Cauldron still couldn't believe it. None of the seven really could.

In their hearts...Ji Ning was just a lovesick man who was exceedingly talented. In truth, they felt quite a bit of pity towards Ji Ning. They knew of his history, and they also knew that his wife 'Yu Wei' had been a spy for the Seamless Gate. In fact, Yu Wei's betrayal during the Crimsonbright Realmwar had very nearly caused them to lose that Realmwar.

Almost everyone in the Three Realms knew that during the battle in the Deerchaser world, the black-robed Godking had personally crushed Yu Wei's truesoul! None of them could forget the agonized howl of rage which Ji Ning had unleashed...

In their hearts, whenever they thought of Ji Ning, they would at most sigh to themselves and say, "What a pitiable man. He is a genius, but alas the war arrived too soon for him."

This was what many believed, including many of the major powers.

In fact, even Ning's own master, Subhtui, often mused to himself that it truly was a pity that Ji Ning had been born so late. If he had been born just a few years earlier, he might've stood a good chance of reaching Houyi's level.

A pitiable man with a pitiable life!

These feelings of commiseration and pity were what most major powers felt when they faced Ning.

Chapter 22: The Apex of the Three Realms

None of them ever would have imagined that this poor youth who had suffered so many setbacks would have climbed up to the apex of the Three Realms.

Right.

The apex of the Three Realms!

The peak of power amongst all the cultivators of the entire Three Realms!

A position which only the likes of Lord Tathagata the Buddha, Daoist Three Purities, Human Sovereign Suiren, Human Sovereign Fuxi, Human Sovereign Shennong, and the inconceivably talented Houyi had reached. But now, yet another figure had appeared by their side...this ordinary-looking white-robed youth who stood before them!

Sword Immortal Darknorth! Ji Ning!

“The world just changed,” Holy Mother Turtlesoul said softly.

“Yes, it has changed. Yet another overlord-class figure has appeared in the Three Realms.” Daoist Jade Cauldron said softly, “And he’s trained for less than a thousand years. He’s an absolute legend, a legend which surpasses even that of Houyi’s.”

The seven Daofathers present all felt a bit dizzy.

They had just watched a legend be born.

A youth had trained for less than a thousand years to journey from the ranks of mortals to the very apex of the Three Realms! He ranked above all other cultivators and stood side-by-side with Daoist Three Purities, Lord Buddha, and the Three Sovereigns of Mankind.

“Let’s go.” Ning looked at them and said quickly, “Lord Tathagata is in a perilous situation right now. We have to go reinforce Fuxi right away and come up with a way to rescue Lord Tathagata. Let me draw you into my estate-treasure for now...”

“Alright.” Daoist Jade Cauldron and the others couldn’t help but comply. When facing an overlord, they unconsciously assumed the role of followers.

Ning nodded. With a wave of his hand, he drew Daoist Jade Cauldron and the others into his estate-treasure, then transformed into a black lightning serpent and flew at high speed towards Fuxi.

.....

Inside the formation trapping Tathagata.

The incomparably ugly, green-skinned Thearch Vileye was sending frantic mental message. “Master, almighty Master, we’re in trouble! In trouble!”

“Eh?” Godfiend Witherspike was currently working alongside Saber to deal with Lord Buddha. Upon hearing these words, he immediately turned his head to glance backwards.

“Dead! All dead!” Thearch Vileye said frantically, “I’m the only one who survived because I was born with two bodies. I lost one of my lives! Darkstill and the others, all of them are dead!”

“What? How? Fuxi has been tied down by the T’ya brothers, while Tathagata is in front of us. Who killed them?!” Godfiend Witherspike was quite unhappy.

He had trapped Tathagata in one of the most dangerous parts of the Goldriver world. Anyone from outside the Primordial Ruinworld would need to spend a considerable amount of time flying before arriving at this place! The reinforcements from the Nuwa Alliance wouldn’t be arriving any time soon. The only possible reinforcements would be the squads of Darknorth and Daoist Jade Cauldron, but the strongest members of those squads were merely close to the overlord level. There was no way they could possibly kill the group of True Gods commanded by the Four Thearchs.

“It was Darknorth.” Thearch Vileye said hurriedly, “It was Sword Immortal Darknorth. He’s terrifyingly powerful. In the face of his power,

our combination formation was far too weak. His hands easily pierced through our formation, then slaughtered all eight of us. The eight led by Darkstill are all dead as well. They must've died to Ji Ning as well."

"WHAT?!" Godfiend Witherspike's face instantly changed. He was no fool. He immediately knew what this meant.

"Yet another individual with the power of an Elder God has appeared?" Godfiend Witherspike frowned deeply. "These aboriginals don't have any good cultivation techniques. This Ji Ning should merely have trained to the True God level! He's merely a True God, yet he is able to unleash the power of an Elder God, and he's trained for less than a thousand years... even in the endless primordial chaos, it's hard to find a genius like this. This is trouble. Yet another problematic figure has arisen."

"Alright, understood!" Godfiend Witherspike barked.

"Y-y-yes!" Thearch Vileye hurriedly slunk back.

Godfiend Witherspike waved his hand, causing Celestial Immortal Blackheaven to appear next to him.

"Mighty Godfiend, have you slain Tathagata?" Celestial Immortal Blackheaven asked eagerly.

"I have some very bad news for you," Godfiend Witherspike said. "Sword Immortal Darknorth, Ji Ning...he already has the power of an Elder God."

"W-what did you just say?" Celestial Immortal Blackheaven's mind went blank.

"Did I stutter?" Godfiend Witherspike said angrily, "Ji Ning. The Ji Ning your people kept on toying with? He already has the power of an Elder God. Or, to put it in words you people might understand, he has the power of an overlord! Those idiots in your Seamless Gate...don't they know that there are some geniuses that you can't simply beat down? You need to avoid causing trouble for them! Yes, some will end up being destroyed, but others...the more you beat them down, the more terrifyingly powerful they will become. You utter imbeciles! You absolute imbeciles!"

“This Ji Ning has trained for less than a thousand years. If you had completely ignored him and paid him no mind, if you had simply let him live a happy life with his wife, how could he possibly have become so powerful so soon? He’s now on the same level of power as I am! Another enemy of such power...I don’t give a damn about who wins this war between you and the Nuwa Alliance, but you are causing problems for me now! This bone is getting harder and harder to chew by the day. The Seamless Gate is a pack of fools. Idiots. Imbeciles! MORONS!”

Celestial Immortal Blackheaven was still mumbling to himself in a daze. “Ji Ning? Overlord?”

“You aren’t lying to me, right?” Celestial Immortal Blackheaven suddenly asked.

When things were in perfect balance, a tiny change could have an enormous impact, like the proverbial last straw that broke the camel’s back!

For a new overlord to suddenly appear at a time like this...the impact this would have on the war would be simply enormous. It was ten times more important than the outcome of the battle for the Deerchaser world!

“You think I’d lie to you?” Godfiend Witherspike laughed coldly. “All four of the Thearchs under my command, aside from Thearch Vileye who was born with two bodies, have been wiped out. It was Ji Ning who killed them.”

“Have the Seamless Gate hurry up and come up with an idea!” Godfiend Witherspike waved his hand and put away the still-dazed Celestial Immortal Blackheaven. After doing so, he once more turned his attention to Lord Tathagata the Buddha.

Lord Buddha was using all his power to defend against the one-armed man. The two seemed to be on equal footing; the one-armed man’s saber-light carried utterly ruinous power, while Lord Buddha’s defense was completely airtight and seamless.

“Darknorth has become an overlord?” Lord Tathagata the Buddha began to laugh. “Ahahaha...the Heavens truly favor our side!”

“Heavens my ass. A chaosworld is nothing more than the manifestations of the Worldheart that lies in its center. ‘Heavens’? Heavens my ass. Stupid bumpkins.” Godfiend Witherspike sneered coldly. “It doesn’t mater. A new overlord might have appeared, but he is definitely inexperienced and new to this level of power. If I can wipe out your Sakyamuni body, it’ll be enough to make up for the danger which Ji Ning poses.”

After speaking, Godfiend Witherspike once more attacked.

Lord Buddha had been able to fight on fairly even footing against the one-armed man, but now Witherspike joined in once more. The fight instantly became uneven, and Lord Buddha had to use all of the divine abilities and techniques he had in order to defend against the assaults of these two alien Outsiders.

“I have to fight at full power in order to withstand these two, but in doing so my divine power is going to be depleted far too quickly. Almost half of it is already gone. It seems that I really am going to die here. Still, for Ji Ning to actually make a breakthrough is cause for celebration.” Lord Tathagata remained quite calm.

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As Godfiend Witherspike was cursing at Blackheaven, Ji Ning had already reached Fuxi’s location while riding his black lightning serpent.

“Eh?” Ning came to a halt and stared downwards.

Off in the distance, he could see an enormous hemispherical formation that covered an area of several million kilometers. Within the sealed area, one could see Fuxi’s group battling against three muscular golden-armored figures.

Ning stretched out his hand. A Darknorth sword appeared within it.

Swoosh!

He immediately charged downwards, transforming into a streak of light as he attacked the sealing formation. His sword stabbed straight through it. Boom! The entire sealing formation was immediately pierced through,

allowing Ning to charge inside. As he did so, the hole he had just created closed up behind him.

Within the formation.

Fuxi was commanding three human experts in a wild battle against the three muscular golden-armored figures. However, the three were protected by layers of watery light that were actually capable of repulsing all attacks. Even though they were occasionally wounded, the wounds would quickly close.

“Darknorth?” When Fuxi’s group of four saw Ji Ning appear, they couldn’t help but reveal looks of excitement.

“Careful,” Fuxi instructed. “These three alien Outsiders have a special combination formation. There are three of them, but it is as though they are a single unit! And they are simply unkillable.”

Ning took a look, then instantly understood.

“The Waterian race?” Ning murmured to himself. World God Northrest had transmitted a great deal of information regarding the primordial chaos to Ning. He immediately recognized that these three alien Outsiders belonged to the Waterian race. Waterians were notoriously difficult to deal with, and in fact they were often described as having indestructible bodies! They were clearly just a trio of True Gods, but they still managed to completely tie down Fuxi’s group.

“Have Kuafu and the others arrived as well?” Fuxi said hurriedly, “Have your squad help out right away. Help me tie down these three alien Outsiders so that I can focus on solving this formation. Tathagata’s situation is quite grim; if too much time passes, he probably won’t be able to hold on for much longer. Remember, all you need to do is tie them down; they are very tough to kill.”

“Yes, they came. Leave these three to me.” Ning waved his hand and a group of figures appeared next to him. Aside from Kuafu’s squad, there was also Daoist Jade Cauldron’s squad.

“Jade Cauldron arrived as well?” Fuxi instantly smiled. “Wonderful. If

the two of you join forces, you'll be more than strong enough to deal with those three alien Outsiders."

Chapter 23: Fire

“Human Sovereign,” Ji Ning sent mentally, “I know where these three alien Outsiders come from.”

“Oh?” Fuxi looked towards Ning.

“Aren’t you skilled in using fire, Human Sovereign?” Ning sent mentally, “So long as you use your Eternal Kindlefire against them, they will immediately retreat.”

Ning’s words were correct. The Waterians were creatures formed from water. They had incredibly durable bodies; even if you cut them apart, they would just reform like water without using up my divine power. This was why they were described as having ‘indestructible bodies’. However, this sort of innate ability came with its own drawbacks as well. There were three ways by which one could deal with Waterians.

The first was to use overwhelming power. A World God could easily blast them apart and grind them into dust, leaving nothing behind at all! However, Ji Ning and the others clearly couldn’t use this method right now.

The second method was to repeatedly attack and injure them. If you injured them heavily enough and often enough, they would still eventually use up all of their energy. At some point, the three Waterians would no longer be able to hold on. However, this method required a very long period of time, and time was exactly what Ning and the others did not have. Lord Tathagata the Buddha wouldn’t be able to hold out for much longer.

Thus...the only method remaining was the third method.

Waterians were completely water-aligned lifeforms. One could use fire to counter them! They were terrified of fire. However, the more powerful a Waterian, the more resistant the Waterian would be to fire. True God Waterians were generally immune to ordinary skyfire or truefire; one would have to use something on the level of Golden Solarfire. Suijen’s ‘Eternal Kindlefire’ was another type of fire that would work.

“Eternal Kindlefire is useful against them?” Fuxi wasn’t that skilled in using this type of fire. His ‘Waterflame Apocalypse Formation’ used ‘Eternal Kindlefire’ alongside ‘Arcane Moonwater’. Suiren provided the Eternal Kindlefire while Fuxi was able to harvest Arcane Moonwater himself. Thanks to his mastery over the Heavenly Daos of Yin and Yang, he was able to control both the Kindlefire and the Moonwater, but this formation was mainly used for extremely wide-area attacks; it wasn’t that useful against individual opponents, which was why he hadn’t used it yet.

Although puzzled, Fuxi trusted Ning.

“Come out.”

Fuxi and his Daofathers actually held the upper hand in this fight; the issue was just that they couldn’t force the three golden-armored Outsiders into submission. Fuxi suddenly let out a low growl, and as he did a massive formation suddenly appeared that was hundreds of kilometers across. The Arcane Moonwater was placed off one side and the Eternal Kindlefire was placed directly before their foes. The flames looked warm and inviting, almost like ordinary flames; they didn’t look as dominating or savage as Golden Solarfire. They were flames that brought warmth to one’s heart.

As soon as the flames appeared, the faces of the three alien Outsiders instantly changed. When the flames touched one of them, he let out a shocked cry. “Elderfire! Quick, flee.”

“Flee.”

The three golden-armored Outsiders no longer dared to tarry. Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! They immediately transformed into three streaks of watery light that disappeared into the distance. Fuxi and the others wished to stop them, but the watery streams were formless, shapeless, and moved at incredible speed. They instantly scurried back into large formation off in the distance.

“If I knew how afraid of fire they were, I would’ve used Eternal Kindlefire long ago.” Fuxi willed the Waterflame Apocalypse Formation to disperse. This was a formation which he had prepared for the war; he

would use it to attack large groups of opponents. When activated, it would blanket an entire major world with enough power to cause even elite Daofathers to feel grave danger. But of course, against overlord Daofathers it would just prove to be a bit troublesome.

“They aren’t afraid of ordinary flames,” Ning said.

In the primordial chaos, flames were divided into three levels of power: Skyfire, truefire, and elderfire.

Elderfire consisted of some of the most ancient types of fire! Golden Solarfire and Eternal Kindfire were both on this level. The term ‘elderfire’ didn’t really exist in the Three Realms as practitioners in the Three Realms only knew of three types of fire on that level; Eternal Kindfire, Golden Solarfire, and Zhurong Godfire.

In truth, since there were many ways to cultivate and understand the Dao, there were many different ways to produce elderfire. If every person gave their own elderfire a special name, there would be an endless number of them. In the Three Realms, these three types of elderfire all had unique names, but in the endless primordial chaos they were all simply referred to as ‘elderfire’!

Advancing beyond elderfire meant making a truly fundamental change. The flames would return to their original, purest form: chaosfire. Generally speaking, only World Gods and Chaos Immortals were capable of controlling chaosfire. A few incredibly talented Elder Gods or Ancestral Immortals would be capable of controlling it, but by far the vast majority were not. To find such a monstrous genius would be a thousand times more difficult than finding Vastheaven Palace.

“You...” Fuxi suddenly stared.

Ning looked back at him.

“You’ve reached the overlord level of power?” Fuxi stared at Ning in shock and delight.

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The Allclans Palace of the Three Realms.

The Nuwa Alliance had become a hubbub of commotion.

“Graceful Peacock, don’t make jokes like that!” The seated Patriarch Subhuti was badly shocked.

“Right, Graceful Peacock. That’s not something you can just randomly claim. To be ‘close to the overlord level’ and to be ‘at the overlord level’ are two completely different concepts. Ji Ning is extraordinarily powerful, but don’t mistake that for him actually being an overlord-level figure.” Exalted Celestial Carefree no longer looked as laidback and carefree as usual. Instead, he looked excited as he nagged at Graceful Peacock.

All of the major powers in the Allclans Palace were staring at Graceful Peacock.

“Graceful Peacock’s words are correct.” Close to her was Daofather Chijingzi. “I, Jade Cauldron, and the rest of our group all saw it for ourselves. Ji Ning is definitely much more powerful than all seven of us combined. Two Thearchs and six True Gods joined together into a formation, and the seven of us were unable to break the formation apart. Darknorth, however, was able to pierce it with his bare hands and kill all eight of them.”

“He killed eight True Gods?” All the major powers were stunned.

“Not just that. When the other eight True Gods who were attacking us saw what had happened, they immediately tried to flee...but Darknorth still killed them all.” Chijingzi shook his head. “Sixteen True Gods, with the Four Thearchs amongst their ranks. In a brief period of time, Darknorth slaughtered them all with ease. From this day forth...the Four Thearchs of the Primordial Ruinworld will be nothing more than an old legend. Oh, wait; I heard that Thearch Vileye has a second body.”

The entire palace was silent for a moment as the major powers all exchanged glances. Then, yet another storm of noise erupted as quite a few major powers spoke out to ask more questions.

“Enough.” A voice rang out, and all the major powers turned to look. It was Lord Tathagata the Buddha, who sat at the very highest position.

“Ji Ning is indeed at the overlord level of power.” Lord Buddha nodded. “I can still hear that alien Outsider leader screaming and raving about it!”

“Congratulations.” Lord Buddha looked towards Subhuti. “You’ve gained yet another overlord-class figure under your tutelage.”

“Hahaha...”

Subhuti laughed delightedly.

Houyi had already been extremely powerful when he had joined Subhuti. Although they framed it as him taking on Subhuti as his master, in truth he was just hiding himself within Mount Innerheart.

It was Ji Ning who had been truly trained by Subhuti. Subhuti had always held Ji Ning’s talent for the sword in high regard. Although Ji Ning had advanced considerably in heartforce, Subhuti had always felt that Ji Ning was still more talented in the sword. And indeed...Ji Ning had reached the fifth stage of swordforce, then became an overlord-level figure.

“If he was able to tear apart that formation with his bare hands, he’s probably become a True God.” Daoist Three Purities laughed.

“Right. If he’s become a Daofather, there would’ve been a resonance with the Heavenly Daos. He must have become a True God.” Subhuti laughed as well.

“He trained less than a thousand years, advancing from being an ordinary mortal to become an overlord. Incredible, simply incredible.” Shennong sighed in amazement as well.

All the major powers seated below them revealed looks of amazement and joy. Their side had just gained yet another overlord; how could they not be delighted?

But they were stunned as well.

Only a few figures had ever stood at the very peak of power in the Three Realms. In the Nuwa Alliance, the only figures had been the two leaders of Daoism and Buddhism, the Three Sovereigns of Mankind, and great

divinity Houyi. But now, yet another person had arisen to stand by their side...a Sword Immortal!

Ever since Pangu had established Heaven and Earth, there had never been a Sword Immortal who could reach such heights.

Daofather Fujū was very famous and was once acknowledged as the number one Sword Immortal of the Three Realms, but he only held the same level of status as Subhuti. World God Northrest had been focused on keeping himself alive, after all, and he truly was quite weak compared to his true level of power; he wouldn't even dare to fight against Mother Nuwa.

Swordfather Darklight, Daofather Holyflame, and the other Sword Immortals were even weaker than Daofather Fujū!

The Pangu Chaosworld, the Seamless Chaosworld, the Three Realms... none of them had ever produced a Sword Immortal which stood at the very apex of power!

But now!

A Sword Immortal had risen up to stand at the very peak of the Three Realms!

Sword Immortal Darknorth! Ji Ning!

"Sword Immortal Darknorth."

"Sword Immortal Darknorth." Many of the major powers in the palace were all murmuring softly to themselves. A sense of dread and respect arose in their hearts, a natural dread that one would feel towards those that were more powerful than one's self!

Many of the major powers would casually refer to Ning as 'Ji Ning'. Now, however, they no longer dared to do so. They would now respectfully refer to him by his Daoist title of 'Darknorth'. Only those who were very close to Ning, such as Subhuti, or those who were extremely powerful, such as Daoist Three Purities and Tathagata, would continue to address Ning by his given name.

From this day forth!

Ji Ning stood at the same lofty heights as Three Purities, Suiren, Tathagata, and the other overlords!

Chapter 24: Ripping Open the Formation

The Allfiends World.

“What?! Overlord level?” The black-robed Godking couldn’t believe it at all.

“Didn’t you say last time that he was just ‘close’ to the overlord level, thanks to his fifth-stage swordforce? It’s only been a few years. How did he suddenly reach the overlord level?” The black-robed Godking felt as though a ball of fire was raging in his stomach, making him feel quite miserable. He barked, “Blackheaven, are you sure about this? Are you sure you weren’t just seeing things?”

Celestial Immortal Blackheaven couldn’t even be bothered to look at the black-robed Godking. Instead, he said solemnly and respectfully towards the Lord of All Fiends, “Master, Godfiend Witherspike is quite angry. Ji Ning is indisputably at the overlord level of power already. Master, what should we do?”

“Indisputably?” The black-robed Godking ground his teeth when he heard this.

Damn.

How...how...how did this kid who had trained for less than a thousand years suddenly rise to the very apex of the Three Realms? Even he, the exalted disciple of the Lord of the Demonheart and the nominal leader of the Seamless Gate, had yet to reach that level!

“You imbecile.” Daomother Devilhand glanced sideways at the black-robed Godking, smiling coldly.

Upon hearing the words ‘you imbecile’, the black-robed Godking snapped out of his daze. He had always played with the hearts of others, but this time he had played himself. He had watched as Ji Ning grew powerful, and he had personally acted to deliver one setback after another to Ji Ning. Now, Ji Ning had advanced to the very apex of the Three Realms...and indeed, the Godking’s role in this could not be overstated.

How could the Godking not feel miserable and stifled? However, he was an extraordinary figure as well. He quickly recovered from his momentary fugue state.

“Fiendlord, Darknorth has already become an overlord-class power. He trains much too quickly. We have to get rid of him right away,” the black-robed Godking said.

“I know.” The Lord of All Fiends frowned. “I heard that Houyi, Suiren, and a group of True Gods and Daofathers have already headed out. Even if we want to intervene, we would have to first travel to the Goldriver world, then slowly fly to the battle site. We probably won’t be able to catch up to Houyi’s group. We won’t be able to help. Blackheaven...tell Godfiend Witherspike that we won’t be able to make it in time. There’s nothing we can do. It will all be up to him.”

“Alright.” Blackheaven nodded.

“Tell him this as well,” the Lord of All Fiends instructed, “Kill as many as he can. He should still do his best to kill Tathagata as soon as possible.”

“Alright,” Blackheaven said respectfully.

The Lord of All Fiends was silent for a moment, then said softly, “The roots of the Nuwa Alliance truly are deep...we haven’t been able to force them to reveal their full power, but we ended up creating a Ji Ning for them. Godfiend Witherspike...hmpf. This alien Outsider has a belly full of bad plans. Let him fight it out with the Nuwa Alliance.”

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The Goldriver world. Outside the grand formation.

Fuxi stared at Ning in delight. He immediately said, “No time to chat about that for now. For you to make your breakthrough at a time like this is proof that Heaven is on our side. Tathagata’s used up too much of his divine power; he won’t be able to hold on for much longer. We have to immediately break into the formation and rescue him.”

“This formation is quite complicated.” Ning stared at the formation

before him.

“Yes.” Fuxi nodded. “If we slowly take our time to analyze it and deconstruct it, we’ll need roughly an hour. By then, Tathagata would be long dead.” Fuxi continued, “Tathagata is an extremely important member of our alliance. If his true body is destroyed, we’re going to be in trouble during the Endwar. No matter what, we have to save him.”

“What do you need me to do?” Ning immediately asked. Although he knew a bit regarding formations, compared to Fuxi he was like a completely ignorant child.

“In order for a formation to remain intact, it has to remain stable,” Fuxi said. “If a formation is destabilized, it can easily collapse. It is reliant on outside power, after all.”

Ning nodded. He understood this principle.

“Over there.” Fuxi pointed towards the distance. Instantly, a strand of divine power flew out towards that part of the formation. “That’s one of the critical parts of the formation. I need you to do your best to tear the formation open at that point. Tear it open as widely as you can, using your full power. This will place an enormous amount of stress on the formation, making it much easier for me to deconstruct it.”

“Alright.” Ning understood.

Ning immediately flew towards that location.

Whoosh!

His body instantly expanded in size, transforming from an ordinary white-robed youth to a massive giant that was thirty thousand meters tall. At the same time, Ning manifested his [Three Heads, Six Arms] technique. His six arms simultaneously stretched out, causing six sharp swords to appear within them. He then stabbed forward violently, using the ‘Blood Drop Stance’ of the [Brightmoon] sword-art. His swords stabbed out towards the formation faster than the speed of light.

The formation was incredibly tough. When Ning’s six arms struck out, he could sense a powerful repulsive force pushing him back. This was a

formation which Godfiend Witherspike had designed to trap Tathagata and kill him. To forcibly break it open...there was no one in the Three Realms capable of it.

Fortunately, Fuxi didn't ask for Ning to do that. All he asked Ning to do was disturb and disrupt it! Once the formation grew unstable, it would be much easier for Fuxi to deconstruct it...but despite that, only an overlord-level figure would be capable of 'merely' disrupting the formation.

"All of you, go assist Darknorth," Fuxi hurriedly barked. "Attack the same part of the formation which Darknorth is attacking."

"Yes." "Alright." "Attack!"

Kuafu's squad and Daoist Jade Cauldron's squad immediately joined together into their respective formations and began to launch waves of attacks against the formation. The three humans under Fuxi's command also began to help out with attacks as well. However, they remained close to Fuxi, protecting him as he focused his complete attention on the formation.

"Eh?" Ning suddenly felt that things had become a bit easier. Gritting his teeth, he let out a low snarl.

Whoooooosh.

His six swords tore at the formation, ripping a small tear into the formation.

The tear was large enough for a person to enter, but there was no point in doing so. The formation was filled with many layers of dangers; one had to destroy the entire thing before entering.

Fuxi ignored all else and completely focused on breaking the formation.

Inside the formation.

Tathagata was on the verge of collapse, with less than a tenth of his divine power left.

"Where did these two Outsider overlords come from? They are incredibly powerful. This truly is a tribulation...and the true face of the

tribulation is gradually beginning to show itself. I expect that we'll only understand the cause of it at the very end," Tathagata mused to himself, sighing silently. Only at the end of the war which ended the Primordial Era had they learned that it was the Lord of All Things who had instigated everything.

This time...things were still early, but two alien Outsiders who were overlord-class figures had already appeared. This caused Tathagata to feel truly worried.

His defensive skills were formidable. In the Three Realms, he was capable of withstanding attacks from three overlords at the same time! Right now, he was currently facing just two Outsider overlords, but he was at the verge of being defeated. Clearly, these two alien Outsiders had incredibly powerful attacks, far more so than the overlords of the Three Realms.

"Eh?" Godfiend Witherspike suddenly frowned. "Why is the formation beginning to fail...?" He was in control of the formation. He could clearly sense that one of the critical parts of the formation was rapidly beginning to fail. If this continued, it would soon completely collapse.

"Master! Master!" The three golden-armored Waterians suddenly appeared. One of them said hurriedly, "That human, 'Darknorth', has transformed to become thirty thousand meters tall. He's tearing at the formation to help Fuxi deconstruct our formation."

"Tearing at the formation?" Godfiend Witherspike instantly understood. It was much easier to deconstruct a destabilized formation. He immediately said, "Saber, hurry up and go stop Ji Ning from disrupting the formation. Without Ji Ning helping him out, it'll take Fuxi a long period of time before he can solve the formation. Leave Tathagata to me; given how fast his divine power is being used up, I imagine he should run dry soon."

"Alright." The one-armed man didn't hesitate. He merely nodded.

Swoosh! He immediately flew away at high speed, charging towards Ji Ning.

Godfiend Witherspike turned his head to stare at Tathagata, still seated in the lotus position. He let out a cold laugh. "Tathagata, your human race has gained a new overlord, 'Darknorth', but it is useless. Saber has gone to deal with Ji Ning. Without Ji Ning's help, Fuxi won't be able to break the formation in time. By the time he does, you will be long dead."

Lord Buddha continued to use all of his divine abilities, striving to resist Godfiend Witherspike's attacks.

Godfiend Witherspike and Saber were both extremely powerful. Both were Elder Gods, after all! Lord Buddha was only a True God; he was only able to resist them when using many divine abilities, secret arts, and ultimate attacks. Now that Saber had left, things were a bit easier for Tathagata. Still...with only a tenth of his divine power left, he was still going to die soon.

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"Haaargh!" The titanic Ji Ning once more struck out with his six arms, his hands covered with rainbow light as he furiously tore at the opening he had created.

"Careful, Darknorth. Tathagata said that a saber-wielding Outsider is heading your way," Graceful Peacock sent hurriedly.

Just moments after Graceful Peacock's message, Ning saw a one-armed golden-armored figure appear. The one-armed man quickly grew in size, also becoming thirty thousand meters tall. This was a grim-looking man that looked just like a human. He held a saber in his hand as he stared at Ning. Taking a single step forward, he appeared in front of Ning then chopped down with the saber in his hand. His saber flashed fiercely, carrying an aura of irresistible power as it hacked down towards Ning.

Ning had two choices.

The first was to continue tearing at the formation. The second was to give up on that and instead focus on blocking the saber.

"Darknorth!" Kuafu, Graceful Peacock, Jade Cauldron, and the others who were helping out from afar all called out in shock. This was because

when the saber-light reached Ning's body, he continued to focus on tearing at the formation, completely ignoring the saber.

CLANG!

When the sharp blade chopped down upon his Ning's divine body, it tore his white robes apart. Sparks flew from the surface of Ning's skin, and a hint of a white impression could be seen...but the saber hadn't even been able to penetrate Ning's skin.

All Ning did was to give the one-armed man a cold look.

Chapter 25: Golden Statue

The saber was merely able to leave a white mark on Ji Ning's chest, but the amount of power it contained was quite shocking. It caused Ji Ning to be knocked backwards, but because he was holding onto the tear in the formation, he was able to borrow from the power of the blow. Riiiiiip. The tear in the formation actually grew larger!

"H-h-how is this even possible?" The one-armed man was dazed. "Didn't they say that he's been training for less than a thousand years? Didn't he just recently break through to become a True God? How could his divine body be comparable to a top-grade Protocosmic spirit-treasure?"

A body that was comparable to a top-grade Protocosmic treasure...there no was no way the Ninth Cycle of the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] could accomplish this.

In all the Three Realms...the only person to ever accomplish this was Lord Tathagata the Buddha. Tathagata's golden body was comparable to a top-grade Protocosmic treasure, which was why when Saber and Godfiend Witherspike occasionally managed to land a blow on him, they weren't able to injure him at all! This was why their plan had been to suppress him, then seal him away!

But now, Ji Ning's divine body had also reached the same level?

"He's just a local aboriginal. He actually...actually..." The one-armed man's heart was quivering.

Kuafu, Jade Cauldron, Fuxi, and the others watching from afar were all shocked as well. "When that Outsider overlord landed a saber-blow against Darknorth, he only managed to leave a small white mark on his body?" All of the spectators had incredible vision. When they saw the one-armed man attack, they could sense how terrifyingly powerful the strike was.

Tathagata himself had said long ago that the Primordial Ruinworld had two overlords in it. One was a one-armed saber wielder, while the other had a tail.

Ning himself was quite calm.

If he had just recently broken through to become a True God, of course he would not have been able to withstand that blow. However...for him, nearly two thousand years had gone past!

World God Northrest himself was a Fiendgod Body Refiner. He was also a member of the incredibly powerful Vastheaven Palace. In terms of personal strength, he stood at the very peak of power amongst World Gods as well! There was an enormous difference in power between the weakest World Gods and the most powerful World Gods, much like how there was an enormous difference in power between third-tier True Immortals and first-tier True Immortals. As an ancient expert who had received many teachings from his powerful sect, and as a figure who was capable of acquiring things like Violetjewel and terrifying sword-arts such as the nameless sword-art, World God Northrest naturally had left behind many incredible techniques for Ning. Although some of the techniques he gave Ning weren't as good as the ones he himself used, they were still techniques that not even most ordinary World Gods would not have access to.

Protective divine abilities!

Evasion divine abilities!

Forbidden skills!

He had passed down many such abilities. Ning had long ago mastered the heartforce scrying technique and the heartforce soul-lock technique, but he had also mastered a protective divine ability. World God Northrest had transmitted to Ji Ning a divine ability known as the [Golden Statue].

The [Golden Statue] divine ability was an ability which World God Northrest himself trained in!

It wasn't a technique which he had acquired from Vastheaven Palace. Although he had learned some techniques from Vastheaven Palace, while adventuring through the endless primordial chaos he had undergone many trials before finally acquiring the upper section and middle section of the [Golden Statue] divine ability!

After acquiring this divine ability, World God Northrest hadn't hesitated at all; he had immediately given up his previous protective divine ability to completely focus on this one.

The [Golden Statue] divine ability had an extraordinary history to it.

In the endless primordial chaos there was an extremely large world, a world far vaster than the entire Three Realms. It was a world that could last forever, unlike the ephemeral chaosworlds. Ten, a hundred, a thousand chaos cycles could go past, but this world would continue to remain. At the center of this vast world there was an enormous levitating island, and hovering directly above the island was a towering golden statue.

The golden statue was 54,000 meters tall, and it emanated an aura of boundless might and majesty. This aura made it so that not even World Gods would be able to step foot onto that levitating island.

Then one day, an absolute genius who had viewed the golden statue for countless years finally managed to gain insight into it and devised the [Golden Statue] divine ability. This instantly became one of the most top-notch divine abilities in existence! It was divided into three sections; the upper section, the middle section, and the lower section.

The upper section of the [Golden Statue] was the introductory section. When one mastered it, one's body would become comparable to a top-grade Protocosmic treasure. True Gods could train in this section.

The middle section of the [Golden Statue] could be used to train one's body to become comparable to a top-grade Chaos treasure. Elder Gods could train in it.

World God Northrest had only acquired the upper section and middle section to this divine ability, but it was so profound and high-class that he had still chosen to use it. It was also comparatively easy to train in and so he quickly mastered these two sections, upgrading his body to become comparable to a top-grade Chaos treasure.

Although he wasn't able to acquire the lower section, it didn't make much of a difference; even if he did acquire it, actually mastering it would

be incredibly difficult.

“Fortunately, I had a foundation via the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art].” When Ning had begun to train in this divine ability, he couldn’t help but sigh.

The [Golden Statue] divine ability didn’t require any special items; it only required energy.

Divine power, Immortal energy, chaos energy, spirit-pills...all sorts of energy could be converted and absorbed! This was what made this such a formidable, high-class technique. Because Ning himself had already reached the Ninth Cycle of the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art], when he trained in the [Golden Statue] he was able to start by using up the pre-existing energy in his body. Thus, it only took him twelve years before his body became equivalent to a top-grade Protocosmic treasure.

The [Golden Statue] was a divine ability that had to be slowly cultivated.

The cycles of the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] could be mastered right away, but this came at the cost of enormous energy requirements as well as a heavy burden being placed on the body. This was why it was completely impossible to continue to devise a way to make the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] usable for True Gods. To upgrade the body of a True God in such a way would result in such tremendous stress being placed on the body that there was simply no way it could endure it. The only option was to slowly work on the body, and that was exactly what the [Golden Statue] did. Since Ning had a solid foundation thanks to the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art], he only needed roughly ten or so years to master the [Golden Statue], and it hadn’t even been necessary for him to use any Great Firmament pills.

If he had, he probably would’ve been able to complete the process in three years. However, his Primaltwin was already using up an enormous amount of Great Firmament pills due to training in the Heavengazer Tower. Ten years wasn’t that long, and so Ning had been willing to take it slow.

“I didn’t expect that this war against the Primordial Ruinworld would end up forcing me to reveal my [Golden Statue] ability.” Ning couldn’t

help but sigh to himself.

Cultivation techniques, protective divine abilities, heartforce scanning techniques...these were all techniques Ning possessed which didn't exist in the Three Realms.

"Sword Immortal Darknorth. It seems everyone in the Three realms completely underestimated you." The one-armed man said coldly, "You actually managed to train a protective divine ability to such an incredibly high level without anyone being the wiser." He had no idea that this particular divine ability was something which even World Gods would go wild over. World God Northrest himself had trained in this divine ability!

As his voice echoed in Ning's ears, he waved his hand and sent a rope flying towards Ning.

"Damn." Ning frowned. Those with powerful bodies would mainly be worried about being bound or being contained inside an item! The one-armed man could launch as many saber-blows as he liked without it affecting Ning, and indeed it would even hasten the formation-tearing process. This rope, however, was another issue.

Whoosh! Whoosh!

Ning immediately released the rip with two of his hands. His other four hands continued to strive to widen the rip, but the two now-freed hands now gripped a pair of Darknorth swords.

Sword-light flashed, spinning into black holes that drew the rope towards them.

"Hmph." The one-armed man charged forward, continuing to manipulate the rope while launching another blow with his saber.

Ning completely focused on defense.

The one-armed man actually had his own techniques that were similar to the [Three Heads, Six Arms] ability, but he chose to keep just one arm. His saber, however, truly was powerful! By comparison, even Ning's swords were a level lower in raw power.

Still, when Ning used two swords to defend at the same time, he was actually still able to defend against Saber's rope and saber combination.

"Darknorth, just hold on for a while longer. I've almost solved the formation," Fuxi sent hurriedly towards Ning.

"Right." Ning's titanic body continued to tear at the formation with four arms while defending himself with two.

"Why is it that I feel like this Darknorth fellow is even tougher to deal with than Tathagata? He's just a local bumpkin; he should at most be a True God." After battling for a short period of time, Saber began to feel as though Ning was unreasonably tough. But of course, he had no idea that Ning was actually a half-step Elder God! Ning also had a sword-art that surpassed the heavenly Daos, and he had spent nearly two thousand years training within the Heavengazer Tower. This made it so that his sword-arts had become even more well-rounded than before.

"Saber, why is the formation still breaking apart?" Godfiend Witherspike sent mentally.

"Master, Darknorth has a formidable protective divine ability that is as good as Tathagata's! His sword-arts are incredible as well. I can't stop him!" Saber sent mentally.

"Are you seeing things?!" Godfiend Witherspike grew frantic.

"When I landed a saber-blow on him, I was only able to leave behind a white mark," Saber replied.

Godfiend Witherspike continued to launch a furious barrage of attacks against Tathagata, but he felt tremendous frustration in his heart.

"What the hell is going on in the Three Realms? I, an exalted Elder God, had to work incredibly hard in order to toughen my body and make it equivalent to a top-grade Protocosmic spirit-treasure. But these natives... they clearly are mere True Gods. For Tathagata to be able to accomplish this is one thing, but Darknorth's trained for less than a thousand years. How it is that his body is this powerful as well?!" Godfiend Witherspike felt incredibly unhappy right now.

Protective divine abilities were extremely rare and difficult to train in. This was why World God Northrest had immediately discarded his previous technique and instead trained solely in the [Golden Statue] once he acquired it.

“Those with protective divine abilities are always a pain to deal with. Bind him? Tathagata’s palm-arts are too powerful as well. There’s no way I’ll be able to succeed in doing so. My only option is to continue exhausting his store of divine power.” Godfiend Witherspike felt helpless.

Only after exhausting Tathagata would he be able to capture him!

Chapter 26: Battling Godfiend Witherspike

“Can this all be due to Nuwa? Are these techniques that she left behind?” Godfiend Witherspike muttered to himself, “This all came out of nowhere. Now that another troublesome individual like Darknorth has appeared...it seems that taking over the Three Realms and taking away its Worldheart will be even harder than I thought.”

The thing which Godfiend Witherspike desired the most was the Worldheart.

In fact, the Three Realms was formed from the collision of the Pangu Chaosworld and the Seamless Chaosworld. That meant that its Worldheart was most likely the combined Worldhearts of those two chaosworlds. If so, would be even more valuable!

“Those who bar my path shall die.” A savage light flickered in Godfiend Witherspike’s eyes as he suppressed all extraneous thoughts.

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“Keep holding on for just a little while longer,” Fuxi sent hurriedly. “I’m about to break the formation apart!”

“Alright.” The towering Ji Ning continued to tear at the formation with four arms while defending against Saber with his other two.

“Hmph.” Saber frowned. Seeing that he couldn’t stop Ning, Saber suddenly turned and walked away, disappearing from Ning’s field of vision.

“He actually retreated?” Ning couldn’t be bothered to over-analyze the matter. He immediately used all six of his hands to tear at the great formation.

Rumble...

Ji Ning suddenly sensed the strength of the formation begin to dramatically weaken, then vanish entirely. He had been pulling at the rip with all his power; now, all of a sudden, he ripped it completely apart by accident. BOOM! The surrounding area completely exploded, causing

many spatial cracks and tears that quickly healed.

“The formation has been breached!” Fuxi said hurriedly.

“Quick, go save Lord Buddha,” Ning barked back. As the formation broke apart, the surrounding area returned to its normal appearance. Ning could now actually see the golden figure of Lord Buddha seated in the lotus position off in the distance. A Fiendgod with a long tail, loose hair, and an aura of incomparable savagery was furiously assaulting the seated figure, with many of the alien Outsiders of the Primordial Chaosworld helping him out.

“Hurry.” Instantly, Fuxi, Kuafu, Daoist Jade Cauldron, and the others all transformed into streaks of light and flew forward.

“So that’s the other Outsider overlord?” Ning immediately noticed the jade-tailed alien Outsider. The man was completely bald and looked rather handsome. He had completely suppressed Lord Buddha in power. In the face of his assaults, Lord Buddha was only able to completely focus on defense.

“Outsiders!” Upon seeing his old friend in such dire straits, Fuxi immediately let out an angry roar. “Die!”

BOOM!

Instantly, the Waterflame Apocalypse Formation descended. The surrounding area for a million kilometers became filled with Arcane Moonwater and Eternal Kindlefire.

There were dozens of major powers from the Primordial Ruinworld. For a situation like this, a large formation that could launch area attacks was the ideal tool.

“Careful.” None of the alien True Gods or Daofathers dared to continue with their attacks against Tathagata. Instead, they focused completely on protecting themselves.

“This elderfire...” The three Waterians frowned as well as they hid themselves within the formation.

Once this formation appeared, the power of the Primordial Ruinworld arrayed against Lord Buddha instantly lessened.

Swoosh!

A black lightning serpent flashed through the skies, launching an initial strike against the alien Outsiders.

Ning gripped a sword in each of his six arms. Five were Darknorth swords while the sixth was Violetjewel. Things were quite critical and Ning could tell that Lord Buddha wouldn't be able to hold on for much longer; he could very well perish any moment now. At a time like this, he had to fight with full power.

"Master, I'll stop him." The red-bearded elder let out a low growl, his red beard instantly expanding dramatically in size as it struck out towards Ning.

Of the six retainers who followed Godfiend Witherspike, Saber was the most powerful. Next in power was the red-bearded elder! As for the three Waterians, they could just barely reach the Elder God level of power after joining together in a formation, but they were only really skilled in defense.

"Hmph." Ning struck out with his six swords.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Six dazzling streaks of sword-light instantly sliced across the skies. The skies had been completely covered by the endless strands of red beard, but all the strands were instantly shattered apart. The red-bearded elder's face turned pale with shock, and he hurriedly retreated to hide behind the formation that had been set up by those dozens of alien True Gods. He sent mentally in panic, "Master, Sword Immortal Darknorth is shockingly strong. I'm unable to stop him."

After shattering the old man's red beard, Ning charged straight towards Lord Tathagata in an attempt to rescue him.

"Saber, you go deal with Fuxi. Leave Ji Ning to me." Godfiend Witherspike knew that, given how Saber and Ji Ning specialized in attacks

and how tough Ji Ning's body was, it was unlikely that Saber would be able to succeed in doing anything to Ji Ning. Fuxi wasn't that offensively powerful; it would actually be a bit tougher for him to face Saber."

"Alright." Saber nodded.

Swoosh! Godfiend Witherspike flew towards Ji Ning.

Rumble...

A streak of light suddenly curved towards Ning without any warning at all. Ning was badly startled, but fortunately he had been using his heartforce to constantly scan the area.

"Fast! So this Outsider overlord's tail has actually surpassed the limits of the Heavenly Daos!" Ning was truly surprised.

Godfiend Witherspike was able to attack with his tail at incredible speed. Ning immediately chopped out with his sword.

Clang! Sparks appeared as the sword clashed with the tail. Godfiend Witherspike's body was tremendously durable as well.

"He actually managed to block with ease?" Godfiend Witherspike frowned as he manifested a total of six arms, continuing his attacks against Ning.

The two instantly began to battle against each other in midair, six arms against six arms.

As the battle began, Ning realized that although Godfiend Witherspike was very strong, only his tail had surpassed the limits of the Heavenly Daos; his arms had not!

"Go!"

Suddenly, Ning unleashed Violetjewel. Prior to this, he had been hiding Violetjewel's full power, keeping it weak and in line with the other five Darknorth swords. Now, however, Ning suddenly slammed Violetjewel down as he used the 'Heavenbreaker stance' of the [Brightmoon] sword-art.

BOOOM!

Violetjewel crashed down like the thunder, slamming down against Godfiend Witherspike's pale white arm. Godfiend Witherspike's face instantly changed dramatically as he was knocked backwards.

"What?!" All the major powers of the Primordial Ruinworld were shocked. It had seemed as though the Godfiend had held the upper hand in his fight against Sword Immortal Darknorth. How was it that he was suddenly sent flying backwards?

"You were actually hiding your true power?" Godfiend Witherspike let out a bellow, then charged forward once more.

"Even when I use Violetjewel, I don't have much of an advantage over him." Ning also frowned as he charged forward as well.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The two exchanged lightning-fast attacks as they battled furiously.

Ning had the advantage of Violetjewel.

Witherspike had the advantage of being a true Elder God.

The two actually battled to a complete standstill! This sight caused both the powers of the Nuwa Alliance and the powers of the Primordial Ruinworld to feel shocked.

"The alien Outsider is actually this powerful?"

"Sword Immortal Darknorth is actually this powerful?"

Both sides were stunned.

The Nuwa Alliance was stunned at Witherspike's power. The Primordial Ruinworld was stunned at Ji Ning's power! Even though Ji Ning was an overlord-class figure, they had thought that since Ji Ning had trained for less than a thousand years, he was still inexperienced. Moments ago, Ji Ning had revealed a truly shockingly powerful protective divine ability... and now, he had revealed that his attacks were every bit as powerful as those of this Outsider overlord!

More than half a chaos cycle had gone past since the war that ended the Primordial Era. There were some major powers who were hiding their

improvements; it was entirely possible, for example, that Daoist Three Purities' 'Immortal Slaying Formation' was even more powerful than Ji Ning's attacks.

But...

In terms of speed, Ji Ning had the [Ninehorn Lightning Serpent] technique.

In terms of defense, he had the [Golden Statue] technique.

In terms of attack, he stood at the very peak of the Three Realms.

Ji Ning had no apparent weaknesses at all. This made him even more dangerous, as he could deal with all types of situations. Any major power, Godfiend Witherspike included, would feel a headache coming when they had to fight against Ji Ning.

"Inexperienced? Inexperience my ass! Those Seamless Gate idiots! They kept on toying and toying and toying with him...and now, those imbeciles have ended up creating a freak of an enemy." Godfiend Witherspike ground his teeth. "There's no point to fighting against him like this. He's too powerful; there's no way I can kill him. I should focus on killing Tathagata instead."

"Hmph. Sword Immortal Darknorth...I paid quite the price to acquire this formation. I wouldn't be willing to use it against just anybody," Godfiend Witherspike mused to himself.

Boom!

In the same instant that the two exchanged blows yet again, Godfiend Witherspike suddenly waved his hand.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Six utterly enormous stone pillars suddenly appeared out of nowhere, descending from the heavens to cover an area of tens of thousands of kilometers. The stone pillars instantly began to radiate with blurry light, completely sealing off the outside world and causing space itself to turn blurry.

“Darknorth!” Fuxi and the others were shocked as they saw this enormous blurry formation descend and trap Darknorth within it.

“Fuxi, correct?” Godfiend Witherspike turned his head to smile coldly at Fuxi. “I heard that your skill in formations is the best amongst the locals. Go ahead and try to break this one if you can,ahaha...”

Fuxi’s heart had turned cold as he soon as he saw those six stone pillars. The stone pillars were covered with extremely arcane runes. These runes contained incredibly profound mysteries of space within them, and Fuxi’s head turned dizzy as soon as he looked at them. He instantly understood that this was definitely a formation that vastly, vastly outstripped any formation he had ever made. There was no way he would ever be able to possibly break it.

His guess was correct. This was a formation that had been created by a Chaos Immortal who was skilled in the art of formations. It was one of the trump cards which Godfiend Witherspike used when he adventured in the primordial chaos to trap tough foes.

If you wanted to survive adventuring through the primordial chaos, you needed to have some trump cards up your sleeve.

The Waterians under his command were another set of trump cards; when he encountered great danger, he would force those three servants of his to go block for him. However, they were only one of his ‘ordinary’ trump cards. This formation was one of his most important ones. Once unleashed, any foe trapped within would need to spend a long period of time before being able to overcome it. By then, he would’ve fled long ago.

I might not be able to kill you, but I can trap you!

Godfiend Witherspike had paid quite a heavy price to acquire this item. If it wasn’t for the fact that Ji Ning was incredibly powerful, he wouldn’t have been willing to use this treasure at all. If a foe spent enough time figuring out how the formation worked, he would be able to break through it and render it completely useless in the future. This sort of formation was generally a single-use item; Witherspike certainly didn’t have the ability to remake it or repair it!

“First, I’ll kill Tathagata. Then, if I have enough time, I’ll kill Fuxi as well,” Godfiend Witherspike mused to himself.

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Ning had started to battle against Godfiend Witherspike again. Just as he had been knocked backwards a few steps, he saw six stone pillars descend out of nowhere. Immediately afterwards, the area around him turned blurry.

Neither heartforce nor coresense could see past the haze, and he was only able to physically see to a distance of three hundred meters.

“A formation?” Ning stared at the blurry area around him. “I’ve been trapped in a formation?”

Chapter 27: Fighting Back

Ji Ning brandished Violetjewel, causing it to explosively increase in size to become many tens of thousands of meters long.

“Break!” Faced with this blurry region, Ning let out a roar as he raised the enormous sword high into the air, then chopped downwards.

Whoosh!

He struck out with the ‘Heavenbreaker stance’. In terms of intent and will, it wasn’t too far from the will which Pangu had possessed when he had cleaved Heaven from Earth and established the world. Pangu had been born with mastery over the Heavenly Dao of Primordial Chaos, but his establishment of the world was part of his innate purpose for existing; he was the weakest type of World God possible. For those who had actually trained to become a World God, the establishment of a chaosworld would not result in their deaths.

Rumble...

The sword struck out, causing thunder to boom out around it.

“Eh?” Ning frowned. “Although there were some vibrations, the formation is still quite stable. In fact, it is far more stable than the formation we dealt with earlier.”

It would not be possible for him to break through this formation with raw force. What should he do?

Whoosh. Ning began to move, quickly flying forward through the formation. The situation outside was most assuredly quite grim, and Lord Tathagata was in grave danger, but Ning put away all his other considerations as he completely focused on how to break through this formation as soon as he could.

After flying for just a second, Ning came to a halt.

“There is no danger here whatsoever...”

“I flew a few hundred thousand kilometers in that second, but I

encountered no danger whatsoever, nor where there any illusions. All I see is this perpetual blur and haze.” Ning was stunned. “Can it be...is this an ‘Endless Road’?”

“Those six stone pillars...right. Damn! This is an ‘Endless Road’ formation!” Ning’s face instantly turned unsightly to behold.

World God Northrest had transmitted much information to Ning, including a great deal of knowledge regarding common yet troublesome formations. One such formation was known as the ‘Endless Road’.

In the endless primordial chaos, there were worlds that were far larger than the Three Realms which held many major powers. All of them needed to train, and so it was quite common for them to exchange techniques and items with each other! One particularly powerful type of formation which many Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were quite willing to purchase was this, the ‘Endless Road’.

The principles behind the ‘Endless Road’ were quite simple. It made use of the principles of the Dao of Space to transform a region that was originally just ten thousand kilometers in size to become a hundred million kilometers in size! The target would be trapped at the very center of the formation. If you wanted to escape it, the only option you had would be to physically fly out of it.

There was no way to teleport from within the formation. Thus, you had to spend a considerable amount of time flying from the center of the formation to the outside. That period of time would be more than enough for the formation-user to either flee or do something else! This made this particular formation a very popular item in the endless primordial chaos, and each time someone offered one for sale it would be immediately snapped up.

Of course, it was also theoretically possible to break the formation through raw force! The problem was that although the formation was seemingly simple, the arcane mysteries of the Dao of Space inside it were unfathomably profound. Even World Gods or Chaos Immortals would need a bit of time to break the formation. As for Elder Gods and Ancestral

Immortals? There was no chance of it at all.

“All I can do is keep flying!” Although Ning felt incredibly frantic, there was nothing else he could do.

Swish! Ning transformed into a black lightning serpent, chose a direction, then immediately began to flee at high speed.

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“Save Tathagata!”

Outside the formation, the battle had reached a crescendo.

Fuxi was leading Kuafu and Jade Cauldron’s squads in a furious assault against the one-armed man, ‘Saber’. Saber had transformed to become thirty thousand meters tall, and he sent his saber flashing out in streaks of cold, savage light, preventing Fuxi and the others from moving past him. Fuxi was still just a True God, after all; although he had extremely profound insights into the Dao, he had primarily focused on the art of formations. While using formations he was able to just barely be a match for Saber, but he was still at a significant disadvantage.

Only someone like Ji Ning, a half-step Elder God who had a powerful divine body and a sword like Violetjewel, could truly cause Saber trouble. Even Godfiend Witherspike had been unable to do anything to Ning and had been forced to use his precious Endless Roads formation to trap Ning.

“Damn.”

“Attack.”

“Attack!”

Kuafu, Jade Cauldron, and the others had all joined together into formations and were launching attacks from far away, but Saber was able to easily block the attacks.

As for the other golden-armored retainers of Godfiend Witherspike, they were in command of the True Gods and Daofathers of the Primordial Chaosworld, having organized them into formations to resist the Waterflame Apocalypse Formation. Every so often, they’d launch a few

attacks as well.

For now, Fuxi's entire squad had been completely blocked off by Saber and the enemy major powers.

"This one-armed Outsider is far too powerful." Fuxi gritted his teeth. Per the plans of the Nuwa Alliance, Fuxi's role was generally to focus on using formations to control and influence the overall battlefield, not fight against powerful ones in one-on-one combat!

"Tathagata, you have to hold." Fuxi willed it, and instantly the Arcane Moonwater and Eternal Kindlefire close to Godfiend Witherspike transformed into a pair of enormous dragons, one of water and one of fire. The two dragons furiously coiled around the mighty Godfiend!

This was the 'true' way to use the Waterflame Apocalypse Formation. Because Fuxi had to spend much of his attention on dealing with Saber, he was only able to activate the Waterflame Apocalypse Formation within that fairly small region. Clearly, he was planning to use it to tie down Godfiend Witherspike.

Clang! Clang! The dragons of fire and water coiled around Godfiend Witherspike, but his body was so durable that he was able to completely ignore them.

"A technique that joins elderfire and elderwater together? This technique is so profound that it can actually slow down my movements." Godfiend Witherspike quickly realized how tough this formation was to deal with, but he still let out a sneer. "A pity for them that Tathagata is almost done for."

Although he was being constricted by the dragons of water and fire, he continued to furiously rain down attacks against Lord Buddha.

After the formation had been broken apart, Lord Buddha had risen to his feet, intending to flee. But...

Godfiend Witherspike moved even more quickly than he did. No matter how he tried, Tathagata was unable to escape.

"My divine power is almost exhausted." Lord Buddha let out a soft sigh.

Whoosh.

A kind-looking Buddha dressed in a kasaya frock suddenly emerged from Lord Tathagata's body. Light blazed around his body as he struck out with full power, assaulting Godfiend Witherspike.

"Ahaha, is this your final attempt to fight back? You are going to sacrifice your dharma-bodies now?" Godfiend Witherspike laughed wildly. Boom! Boom! Boom! After three brief clashes, the blazing figure completely broke apart and vanished.

"That was his Medicine Buddha body." The distant Fuxi felt pain in his heart upon seeing this.

The Sakyamuni body was Lord Buddha's true body, and he had four mighty dharma-bodies as well. This time, Lord Buddha had brought his Sakyamuni body along with two of his dharma-bodies, but over the course of this battle they had exhausted all of their energy. Lord Buddha's only choice was to try and preserve his Sakyamuni body while sending out his dharma-bodies to die in the hopes of buying some more time.

These dharma-bodies had all been painstakingly cultivated...and today, in a single day, they would be destroyed.

Still, the true body was what mattered the most. So long as the true body remained alive, the dharma-bodies could slowly be remade once more.

"Go." Lord Buddha continued to flee as he sent yet another dharma-body flying out from inside of him. This dharma-body blazed with blinding fire, as though it was the sun itself. This was the Great Sun Buddha body, and its attacks were even more powerful than the attacks of the Medicine Buddha body.

But...

In terms of technique and power, it was still a bit weaker than the true body. If even the true body was unable to withstand Witherspike's attacks, how could the Great Sun Buddha possibly do so?

"Still struggling?" Godfiend Witherspike felt quite irritated. He

continued his furious assaults, and a few short clashes later the Great Sun Buddha body also dissipated into specks of light.

Swoosh! Godfiend Witherspike continued to chase after Lord Buddha.

“You want to join together with Fuxi?” Godfiend Witherspike’s tail suddenly lashed out. Whoosh! It struck out faster than the speed of light towards Lord Buddha. Lord Buddha immediately moved to block. Boom! Lord Buddha was sent staggering backwards.

Lord Buddha’s eyes were dim but peaceful. He folded his hands together in prayer, looking calmly at the approaching Godfiend Witherspike.

“TATHAGATA!” Fuxi cried out in agony.

“Killing you really wasn’t easy.” Godfiend Witherspike finally relaxed slightly. ‘Lord Buddha’ apparently no longer had any divine power left. He had long ago converted all of flesh and blood inside of him into divine power, leaving behind only the outside layer of his golden body. His golden body technique was quite special; he became incredibly powerful after mastering it, but there was no way to reconvert his golden body into divine power. After he died, he would only leave his golden body behind.

There were many Bodhisattvas and Buddhas who would leave behind golden bodies after dying. But of course, Tathagata had trained his golden body technique to the highest possible level.

“So I have become the first to fall before the great tribulation.” Lord Buddha looked at Godfiend Witherspike calmly.

“It seems he’s preparing to give me one final blow before he dies?” Godfiend Witherspike didn’t dare to be over-confident. Killing Tathagata was no easy feat, and he had paid quite a heavy price to accomplish it. He had lost all four of his Thearchs, and he had even been forced to take out his ‘Endless Roads’ formation to trap Sword Immortal Darknorth. He certainly didn’t want to mess up at the very end!

BOOM!!!

An sudden explosion could be heard. Off in the distance, the six stone pillars surrounding the blurry formation were suddenly revealed, along

with another figure...that of the sword-wielding Ji Ning.

“Sword Immortal Darknorth?” Godfiend Witherspike’s face immediately changed, but his expressions then turned savage as he charged unhesitatingly towards Tathagata. “DIE!” His sharp claws struck directly towards Tathagata, giving the distant Ji Ning no time to intervene at all.

When Lord Buddha saw Ji Ning emerge, a smile appeared on his formerly calm face. He let out a low growl, then struck out with both his palms. Boom! His giant hands struck out towards Godfiend Witherspike like a pair of massive worlds.

Chapter 28: Elite Elder God

These two palms were like worlds unto themselves, and they angered Godfiend Witherfiend so much that he ground his teeth. “So he really was preparing to deliver one final blow to me before dying.”

Lord Tathagata the Buddha was a True God. Although he was able to unleash the power of an Elder God, in terms of raw power he was indeed a bit inferior to Godfiend Witherspike. However, the intricacies of his palm-arts far surpassed Witherspike’s techniques. There was no way Godfiend Witherspike could avoid this final desperation attack; his only choice was to face it head-on.

BOOM!!!

The two attacks collided.

Lord Tathagata borrowed from the force of the collision to fly backwards.

“Outsider!” Ji Ning let out a loud roar, transforming into a black lightning serpent as he charged towards Godfiend Witherspike.

“Damn.” After exchanging blows with Tathagata, Godfiend Witherspike was sent staggering backwards as well. By the time he recovered, Ji Ning was already attacking. Godfiend Witherspike could only cast a hateful, resentful glance towards Lord Tathagata as the latter flew far away. “I spent all that effort and paid such a heavy price, but I actually wasn’t able to kill even one of these ‘overlord’ level bumpkins. I really don’t want to accept this.”

Ning’s sword-light descended!

It was dazzling to behold, and it seemed to contain enough power to split the skies apart.

Whap! Godfiend Witherspike’s tail lashed out, transforming into a similarly dazzling streak of light that collided against the sword-light.

Godfiend Witherspike was knocked flying backwards. He gave Ning a cold look, watching as Ning transformed into a black streak of lightning

that flew next to Lord Tathagata. With a wave of his hand, he pulled Lord Tathagata into his own estate-treasure.

“Master!” The distant one-armed man sent a mental message to him.

“Let’s leave!” Godfiend Witherspike said angrily.

This word, ‘leave’, came from his lips with the utmost of reluctance. Godfiend Witherspike waved his hand, causing those six stone pillars to disappear. Although the ‘Endless Road’ had been somewhat damaged by Ning’s escape, a skilled formations expert would still be able to repair it. The price of repairing it would be much lower than the price of buying a new one.

“Leave.” The one-armed man waved his hand, collecting the alien True Gods as well as the three Waterians, the red-bearded elder, and the skinny elder. He then immediately flew over to Godfiend Witherspike’s side.

“Count yourself lucky.” Godfiend Witherspike smiled coldly towards Ning and the others. “The Primordial Ruinworld is a large place. We’ll take things slowly.”

Swoosh!

Godfiend Witherspike and the one-armed man disappeared, a dark-golden castle appearing where they were. The dark-golden castle immediately flew away and departed.

Within the castle.

Godfiend Witherspike was once more seated on his throne. Below him were his six retainers.

“Master, Sword Immortal Darknorth was trapped inside the the Endless Road formation. How did he end up emerging from it so quickly?” The red-bearded elder couldn’t help but ask this question. “It was too fast. He was only trapped inside for a brief period of time.”

“It was quite brief.” The one-armed man frowned as well. “These locals...they are fairly ignorant and ill-informed. They shouldn’t have been able to recognize the formation as an Endless Road formation.

Someone who has never seen this formation...upon being trapped inside it, he should've spent a long period of time trying to figure out what to do. The formation is so vast that flying out would take a good long while."

"Agreed." Godfiend Witherspike's eyes flashed with cold light as he nodded slowly.

They were right. Someone trapped in a formation he had never seen before would generally spend some time carefully testing it out. It would usually take them quite some time before emerging from the Endless Road formation. Ji Ning, however, had come out a short period of time after being trapped inside.

"There's only one explanation. As soon as he was trapped inside the formation, he immediately knew what it was and how to escape." Godfiend Witherspike said coldly, "He immediately used his [Ninehorn Lightning Serpent] technique to fly out of it at top speed. That sounds about right."

"How could he possibly have immediately recognized the formation?" The one-armed man frowned. "Can it be that he's seen it before?"

"The Three Realms have encountered figures like 'All Things' before," Godfiend Witherspike said. "Sword Immortal Darknorth must have acquired some records pertaining to the 'Endless Road' formation from some alien Outsider who wandered into this place. Hmph. He can count himself lucky."

"Master, if you truly wished to kill Tathagata...I feel that you could have accomplished it." The one-armed man looked towards Godfiend Witherspike.

There were differences in power amongst Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals. Ordinary Elder Gods, those who were born at that level of power, were close in strength to Three Purities, Fuxi, Tathagata, and the others.

The Lord of All Things and Godfiend Witherspike could be described as elite Elder Gods. The Lord of All Things reached that level of power thanks to his mastery over golems and bugbeasts, while Godfiend

Witherspike rose to power thanks to extremely bloody and violent techniques. This was why he was known as a 'Godfiend'.

In the endless Primordial Chaos, people titled 'Godfiend' were generally people who possessed and used exceptionally bloody and terrifying techniques. But even if he didn't use those secret techniques, Godfiend Witherspike would still be considered an elite Elder God, albeit just barely.

The only reason why Ji Ning was able to battle Witherspike to a standstill was because he had terrifying sword-arts and a half-step Elder God body, which allowed him to reach the power level of an ordinary Elder God. With the addition of Violetjewel, he could also be considered to have just barely reached the level of an elite Elder God!

"Right." Godfiend Witherspike slowly shook his head. "Ever since I mastered that secret art, I've only used it a total of three times. Each time I use it...I will suffer severe repercussions, and it'll be another ten thousand years before I can use it again. The Endwar will be arriving soon, in a few more centuries at most. We can't be hasty! We've killed two of Tathagata's dharma-bodies, and I've sacrificed both the Four Thearchs as well as my Endless Road formation. We've done enough. The rest is up to the Seamless Gate. Their 'Lord of All Fiends' is extraordinarily powerful; the only person in the Three Realms who worries me is him."

"Agreed." The one-armed man nodded. "For an Elder God to be able to escape from the clutches of a World God and flee so quickly that the World God can't even catch up...this is unheard of. I've voyaged through the endless primordial chaos for quite a long period of time and have met over ten thousand Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals, but I've never met such a formidable figure. Such figures only exist in legends. I never would've thought that an Elder God located in such a backwater chaosworld would be so powerful."

"Right...but we've only just begun to play," Godfiend Witherspike said softly. "These two alliances haven't really begun the final fight to the death yet. We would be a laughingstock if we revealed all of our cards now."

“That Darknorth fellow...” Godfiend Witherspike suddenly frowned. “He has six swords. When he strikes with the blood-colored one, he is actually able to just barely reach the level of an elite Elder God in power. Is it due to the sword? Or is it because he is already an Elder God?”

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Ji Ning was standing alongside Fuxi. Behind him was Kuafu, Daoist Jade Cauldron, and the other members of their group.

They watched as the dark-golden castle quickly disappeared into the distance. Only then did Ning let Tathagata emerge once more.

“What a terrifying group of alien Outsiders,” Fuxi murmured softly.

“Thankfully, Ji Ning was with us.” Tathagata smiled as he looked at Ning.

Fuxi looked at Tathagata, then let out a sigh. “It’s all my fault. I was too weak.”

“No, those alien Outsiders were simply too strong.” Tathagata shook his head.

Fuxi couldn’t help but nod. He said solemnly, “Yes. They were too powerful, especially that one with a tail. Those two alien Outsiders...they should have the power of elite Elder Gods. Fortunately, Ji Ning was able to stop him.” Fuxi then turned to look towards Ning, his eyes filled with surprise. “Darknorth, you were actually able to stop them...”

“They still had the upper hand when we fought,” Ning said. “I was only able to fight on par thanks to this sword.” When he had used the blood-colored Violetjewel, his blows had become noticeably more powerful. The alien Outsider had seen it, as had Fuxi and the others. They probably had already guessed the truth for themselves.

In terms of raw power...no one in the Three Realms, those two alien Outsiders included, would dare claim that they were certain of defeating Ji Ning in a fight! Given how strong he was, there really was nothing for Ji Ning to fear any longer. Still, he couldn’t tell everyone that he had only unlocked a fraction of Violetjewel’s true power. Fully repairing

Violetjewel...that would be a task for the distant future.

“No wonder. It seems that you’ve had quite a few fortuitous encounters, Ji Ning.” Fuxi smiled and nodded. “Ji Ning, you might not fully understand what an ‘elite Elder God’ is! Myself, Nuwa, Zhurong, the Ancestor Dragon...we were all born as Elder Gods, which means we were born at that level of power. Three Purities, Tathagata, Shennong...they are True Gods and Daofathers, but thanks to their tremendously profound insights into the Dao they too are comparable to ordinary Elder Gods. In the Three Realms, we describe this level of power as that of the ‘overlords’.”

Ning nodded.

“An Elder God who has sufficient insights into the Dao, such as having mastered the Five Elements of the Heavenly Daos, will be described as an ‘elite Elder God’. Mother Nuwa, for example; even before the war that ended the Primordial Era, she had mastered the Heavenly Daos of Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, Earth, Yin, Yang, and Life. Eight Heavenly Daos! She was so powerful that she was even superior to so-called ‘elite Elder Gods’. She was far more powerful than the two alien Outsiders we encountered today. Only Demonheart, the lord of the Seamless Chaosworld, was comparable to her.”

Ning nodded. Nuwa truly was a monster. She was an Elder God who had mastered eight of the Heavenly Daos...and then, in the final battle, she had broken through to master the Heavenly Dao of Primordial Chaos and become a World God!

Chapter 29: Devastation

“Unfortunately, Nuwa left.”

“Demonheart merged into the Heavenly Daos.”

Fuxi shook his head. “I was born an Elder God with power over the Heavenly Dao of Destruction. I sent myself into reincarnation, never to regain my former memories or powers until I master the Heavenly Dao of Life.” Fuxi sighed, then said self-deprecatingly, “I’ve now mastered two additional Heavenly Daos, the Heavenly Daos of Yin and Yang, but I’ve been unable to master the Heavenly Dao of Life. That’s why I remain merely a True God.”

“In all the Three Realms, the only known Elder God still around is the Seamless Gate’s ‘Lord of All Fiends’.”

“Now, Darknorth, you have acquired a protective divine ability that is on par with Tathagata’s.” Fuxi looked at Ji Ning. “Your sword-arts are so formidable that you were able to fight that alien Outsider to a standstill. Given your power, I imagine that there is no longer anyone in all the Three Realms who you would need to fear. For us to gain a new, powerful ally like you at such a critical moment in history is truly a blessing for our side.”

Tathagata smiled as well as he looked at Ji Ning. Although he had lost two of his dharma-bodies, he still felt joy upon seeing how powerful Ji Ning was.

The group was in no hurry to continue the campaign. They just continued to wait without moving. After enough time passed for a kettle of tea to be boiled, Houyi and Suiren’s group of True Gods and Daofathers arrived as well.

There weren’t too many major powers left to protect the Nuwa Alliance in the Three Realms, and so a short while later Lord Buddha and Suiren departed, taking those True Gods and Daofathers back with them.

Sword Immortal Darknorth, Human Sovereign Fuxi, and Houyi

commanded a total of twenty-nine True Gods and Daofathers as they continued their campaign through the Primordial Ruinworld! Every remaining part of the Primordial Ruinworld was located in extremely dangerous regions. After their latest experience, Ning and the others advanced with even greater caution and moved even slower than before.

This time, they were divided into just three squads. The three squads were led by Ji Ning, Fuxi, and Houyi!

Their three squads maintained a distance of three million kilometers from each other. They advanced in lockstep and they kept in continuous contact with each other.

The reason why they hadn't been willing to join together into a single group was precisely because they were worried about everyone ending up trapped within a single formation. Last time, if Fuxi and Ji Ning had both been trapped inside the formation with Tathagata, it would've been much harder for Fuxi to break apart the formation. Ji Ning wouldn't have been able to assist him by tearing at the formation from outside! Thus, although separating into three squads created new risk, at least it would ensure that they wouldn't all be caught in one trap.

Three million kilometers was a fairly short distance. Given Ning's speed with the [Ninehorn Lightning Serpent], he'd be able to travel that distance in a single breath. All the squads would be able to quickly reinforce each other.

Time passed, one day at a time. The three squads continued to destroy every single world and region they travelled through!

Godfiend Witherspike and the Seamless Gate continued to set down traps and formations to deal with them, but the extremely cautious experts of the Nuwa Alliance would never encounter such a terrifyingly dangerous situation again. They slowly and laboriously dealt with every single danger as they destroyed one world after another.

Destroying the Primordial Ruinworld represented destroying the territory and homeland of the alien Outsiders.

"The Endwar is about to sweep through the Three Realms. If these

Outsiders are permitted to survive, they would most likely come and invade the Three Realms.” None of them showed any mercy. For the sake of the survival of their races, no mercy could be shown.

Godfiend Witherspike did have some estate-treasures which allowed him to hold some living creatures, but how many could it possibly hold? It could hold less than 0.01% of the creatures who lived in the Primordial Ruinworld. All the others would die!

As Ning, Houyi, and Fuxi continued to work together and support each other, they grew much closer to each other as well.

Thirty-nine years had passed since the launching of the campaign against the Primordial Ruinworld. Nineteen years had passed since Tathagata had fallen into danger.

Outside the Primordial Ruinworld.

A hatchet-carrying woodcutter, a sword-wielding white-robed youth, and a tall man dressed in Daoist robes stood together in the Void, a large group of major powers behind them. Everyone was staring at the Primordial Ruinworld.

Rumble...

They could see a massive realm teetering at the brink of collapse. The breaking process slowly hastened...and then, all of a sudden, the badly damaged Primordial Ruinworld began to completely break apart.

With a thunderous boom, countless shattered spatial shards appeared in that area. The entire Primordial Ruinworld was completely imploding, and as it did the increasingly powerful spatial shards began to destroy everything.

Elsewhere in the Void.

A dark-golden castle was hanging here in midair, the space around it rippling with formation runes. However, there was no way to locate this ship with the naked eye, and even coresense was completely blocked off.

Inside the castle.

“Quite a view.” Godfiend Witherspike’s gaze passed through the walls of the castle, seeing through the endless void of space as he stared at the distant Primordial Ruinworld. The Primordial Ruinworld looked like an enormous fireworks display as countless spatial shards were sent flying in every direction.

“The Three Realms.” The alien True Gods standing before him gnashed their teeth in rage.

This was their home that had just been destroyed!

They had been the followers of the Lord of All Things, but he was defeated in battle. Mother Nuwa hadn’t wiped them out; instead, she had driven them into the Primordial Ruinworld, a place where survival itself was incredibly difficult. It was hard for them to truly flourish in the Primordial Ruinworld, and they had always dreamed of one day counter-attacking and taking over the Three Realms. They would then live in luxury and ease in that beautiful, safe world. They would no longer suffer from random spatial distortions, temporal storms, and more.

They rather hated how deadly and inhospitable the Primordial Ruinworld was...but it was still their home!

Now, even their final refuge had been torn asunder.

The alien True Gods all had estate-treasures with them, and they were able to bring some of their kinsmen with them inside. However, the total amount of kinsmen they could carry was just a tiny fraction of the total population of the Primordial Ruinworld. Those who were left behind all perished.

“The Three Realms. Fuxi. Houyi. Tathagata.” The alien True Gods firmly engraved these hated names into their memories.

Ning and the others neither knew nor cared about their hatred. In fact, if they had the chance they would probably move to completely wipe out all of the alien True Gods. These alien Outsiders were invaders who had always been the enemies of the Three Realms. The more of them the Nuwa Alliance was able to kill, the better!

“Master.” The red-bearded elder suddenly said, “What should we do next?”

“Next?” Godfiend Witherspike said softly, “We’ve sacrificed enough already, and even our territory has been completely destroyed. Fuxi, Darknorth, and Houyi are simply too powerful when they join forces. There’s nothing I can do. The Seamless Gate cannot blame me. It’ll be up to them now.”

“Get some rest, everyone. We will keep waiting. Soon...the Endwar will come soon...” Godfiend Witherspike let out a chuckle. “That’s our true battlefield. Ahaha...it’s been a long time since I’ve truly engaged in such an exciting battle. The last time was back when we were in that mountain gorge. These natives...they don’t have any formidable formations or treasures at all. The only thing they can do in war is to stake their lives. When the Endwar comes, they shall all become delicacies for me to eat...” He licked the corner of his lips with his long tongue.

“The Endwar...” The one-armed man nodded slowly as well.

They had roamed the primordial chaos together, and they had staked their own lives multiple times when doing so.

Godfiend Witherspike was going to acquire the Worldheart of the Three Realms, no matter what the risk or the cost. After Saber finished repaying his debt to the man, he would depart and continue forward on his own path of cultivation.

The other five retainers were true slaves. He had only become a retainer in order to repay a debt. He could be considered a servant, but he was no slave.

.....

The Primordial Ruinworld was simply far too vast. Its collapse and annihilation took three full months to complete.

Houyi, Ji Ning, Fuxi, and the True Gods and Daofathers who followed them simply watched for three full months. After everything came to a halt Fuxi gave the remnants a final look, then nodded. “All of the worlds

of the Primordial Ruinworld have been destroyed. The only thing left in the Primordial Ruinworld are those unique danger zones such as 'Earthmoan Mountain' or the 'Endless Sea'. Those places are too stable; even the destruction of the Primordial Ruinworld wouldn't damage them."

Ning saw roughly ten or so places as well when he scanned the ruins. All of them were extremely stable and dangerous locations!

"The Primordial Ruinworld is finished. Those alien Outsiders are now like a well that has run dry," Houyi said calmly. "They will be unable to propagate and flourish. If they appear during the Endwar, we'll deal with them then."

"Right." Fuxi nodded.

The Nuwa Alliance had actually been quite worried about the Primordial Ruinworld. If the Seamless Gate was defeated but its survivors chose to hide within the inhospitable environment of the Primordial Ruinworld, they would always be hungrily eyeing the Three Realms from there. If that happened...the Three Realms would never know a day of peace!

Now they had destroyed the Primordial Ruinworld. The Lord of All Fiends was formidable and he might be able to flee with the survivors of the Seamless Gate, but if they didn't have a place to live then as a race they would never be able to grow powerful again. They would slowly wither away while the Nuwa Alliance would continue to flourish in the Three Realms, producing more and more experts.

"Ji Ning." Fuxi suddenly sent a mental message to Ning.

Ning was startled. Everyone around them was on their side; why did Fuxi elect to send a private mental message?

"What is it?" Ning asked.

"You now stand at the highest level of power in the Three Realms. In fact, you can be considered one of the most powerful individuals on either side. The Nuwa Alliance has many secrets which you do not know about... but now, it is time to tell you. Perhaps you'll be able to grow a bit more

powerful.” Fuxi looked towards Ning.

“The secrets of the Nuwa Alliance?” Ning felt his heartrate quicken.

“Let us return to the Allclans Palace first. Just follow me later,” Fuxi said.

Fuxi had originally been an Elder God. He was extremely close to Nuwa, and he naturally knew all of the secrets of the Nuwa Alliance.

“Alright,” Ning replied.

Fuxi smiled. “Everyone. Our campaign against the Primordial Ruinworld has lasted for thirty-nine years, but we have finally finished destroying the enemy’s lair! Now, we can set our minds at ease as we turn towards our true foes. We’ve never feared fighting any in a straight-up battle! Come. Let us return to the Allclans Palace!”

“Return to the Allclans Palace.”

The major powers immediately tore a hole through the Void and traversed it back to the Allclans Palace of the Three Realms.

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